





A GUIDE TO THE MILITARY HISTORY OF  
THE WORLD WAR, 1914-1918

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OF THE WORLD WAR

1914-1918

BY  
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CAPTAIN U.S.R.

WITH MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

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THIS BOOK  
IS DEDICATED TO THE  
SOLDIERS AND SAILORS  
OF THE UNITED STATES

WHO  
ACCOMPLISHED WHAT WAS  
THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE

## INTRODUCTION

"The key to any mass of evidence is a narrative synopsis of the actual events."—R. H. C. K.

It is the belief of the writer that it is possible to study the history of The World War at once, and that those who approach the task in the right way will arrive at true results. At first glance this may seem a surprising statement concerning the history of the far-spread struggle that involved the world. It is true that compiling the full and complete history of this war will mean an endless accumulation of evidence from all sources. A complete account of only a single operation will require years for comparing the versions of both sides. Yet, strangely enough, at this time there are data available for use that establish the conduct of The World War to a degree that was not so soon attainable after the ending of hostilities in former wars.

Early in The World War the pressure of public opinion made it necessary for the different governments to give out daily official statements, and this same public opinion forced the government to tell the truth,—or at least a part of the truth. The value of these daily official bulletins has not been appreciated. They were often trivial and evasive, but by carefully checking them off, one against another, the course of the great events could be traced in a way that was never before practicable.

all such military results have been dwarfed by the toll of lives and treasure. To comprehend the trend of the military campaigns of the war will not be the most difficult part of the task. If the reader will follow the scheme of this book, it will become evident that the events which really counted moved with the simplicity and directness of Greek tragedy. But the world has not yet begun to realize the awful losses and the cost of the war. These were great factors in its decisions, and the reader must constantly remember that the campaigns to be studied, which assumed such huge proportions as the war went on, were all the time enforcing a tax upon the resources of the contending nations such as had never been known, and which their peoples could not endure.

The General Staff of the United States Army has given out figures of battle deaths in the war, with a total of 7,450,200.<sup>1</sup> Such losses are almost beyond the power of the mind to grasp, but at once they make it self-evident that The World War cannot be measured merely by victories and conquests of territory. To victors and vanquished alike these awful bills of cost were always present, and no true estimate can be made of the military situation, at any time in the war, without counting these costs in the military results.

The object of this work has been to keep these military results in proper proportion, and to present the varying phases of the war in relation to their effect on the actual military balance between the contending nations. If at times it may seem that sufficient importance is not given to some action or campaign, the reader is asked to remember the vastness and costliness of the struggle, as emphasized in this introduction, and the relatively petty effect of some event that may have attracted undue attention at the time. An attempt has here been made to give the

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Summary, 1919. Ayers.

grand tactics of The World War in a brief form, to avoid being turned aside by details, and to provide a knowledge of the war that will afford a sound basis for reading and studying the campaigns.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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NOTE AS TO THE MAPS. To carry out the scheme of this book, as explained in the Introduction, the usual detailed maps have not been adopted. Instead, diagrammatic maps have been prepared, showing the scope of each operation in relation to the whole front on which it occurred.

For the Western Front a diagrammatic map has been made, adapted from a map provided by the Top. Div. Int. Sec. G. S., A. E. F., which officers were required to memorize. Upon this as a foundation the different operations have been indicated, and paged with the relating chapters in such a way that the map will open outside the book and be available when the text is read.

A similar plan has been followed with the other maps. By this means it is believed that the proportions of the military events will be better understood by the reader.

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CHAPTER I

EVENTS LEADING TO THE WAR

GERMAN KULTUR — THE GERMAN MILITARY  
PLAN

As the object of this work is to give a military history of The World War,<sup>1</sup> any of the usual political discussions concerning the causes of the war would be outside its province. But in order to understand the military position at the beginning of hostilities, it is necessary to trace briefly the course of events which brought about the array of the Central Powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary, against the Entente Allies, France, Russia, and Great Britain. In fact, this grouping of forces at the start might be called an important part of the tactics of the war, so truly did the actual positions of the armies follow as a result — and it is also true that this situation, which had been brought into

<sup>1</sup> GENERAL ORDERS }  
No. 115

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
Washington, October 7, 1919.

I. Official designation of the war against the Central Powers of Europe. — The war against the Central Powers of Europe, in which the United States has taken part, will hereafter be designated in all official communications and publications as "The World War."

(055.9 GAO)

being by the ambitions of Germany, was the real cause of the war.

It must be remembered that Germany had been steadily growing in power in the nineteenth century, after the empires of Europe had been restored by the Congress of Vienna (1815). Prussia had then been reestablished after the devastation of Napoleon, and had gradually assumed the leadership of the German States. In the sixties the wars with Denmark and Austria had strengthened this leadership, and Prussia had become a strong military power. Then came the successful Franco-German War of 1870, won by the well-organized military power of Prussia and the German States, which resulted in uniting the German States under the King of Prussia as German Emperor.

After the War of 1870 Germany continued to gain power under the shrewd policies of Bismarck,<sup>1</sup> who took advantage of the enmity between Great Britain and Russia at the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, and made Germany a dominating power in Europe at the Congress of Berlin (1878), at which the treaties were drawn up after this war. In the crucial period of the last quarter of the century Bismarck was the directing genius of the policies of Germany, which gave to the nation, in addition to its great military strength, an industrial and commercial development that secured world-wide commerce for Germany.

Throughout all this period Great Britain had exercised more control in Europe than any other power, but Great Britain had been absorbed in the task of restricting Russia on account of British fear of Russian aggressions. For this reason the extraordinary growth

<sup>1</sup> It has become the custom, even in books of German origin, to give the names Bismarck, Moltke, Hindenburg, etc., without the prefix Von. To secure uniformity in a book of this nature, this practice will be followed in the case of all German names.

of German power had not been opposed by Great Britain. In fact at times the growth of Germany had been fostered, with the idea that Germany would serve as a buffer against Russia.

The truth was that the expansion of Germany was more of a menace to Great Britain than any other element in the policies of nations at this time, but it was not until the nineties that the British realized that Germany, instead of being a "friendly nation",<sup>1</sup> had become a dangerous rival, aiming to secure the foreign trade which was a great asset of the British Empire. As a consequence of this dawning knowledge, hostility had replaced friendship between Great Britain and Germany. The natural common interest to curb this growing danger drew Great Britain and France together, and with France came Russia as a matter of course. Between France and Russia there had grown up an alliance which was an entente, and Great Britain, France, and Russia became the Entente Allies.

This course of events had resulted in the European situation at the beginning of the war in 1914, and this situation was greatly to the disadvantage of the Entente Allies. Germany had been allowed to grow into a power that dominated Central Europe, fully organized for war and almost openly committed to ambitions that aimed at leadership of the world; the Turks had been maintained in their positions at the Dardanelles, which afterwards did so much harm in the war; and Russia had been kept cut off from the sea, to such an extent that the great resources of the country could never be fully used in the war after Russia had become one of the Entente Allies.

The quick victory over France in 1870 had been won by a wonderful German military organization, and the German Empire had continued to maintain the same military system, with the result that there was an

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury.



ever increasing German ambition to win power by the sword. This perfected military organization had given victory in the Franco-German War, and had thus brought into existence the united German Empire. It was the firm belief of the Germans that the same force would give Germany the dominion of the world.

The impetus of the united strength of Germany, evolved from the War of 1870, had never been understood by outside nations. For Germans the War of 1870 had been their text and their inspiration.<sup>1</sup> They had made it the foundation of their national structure. The following generations of Germans modeled the life of Germany, military, civic, commercial, scientific, and social, upon the efficiency of the War of 1870. All their industries were shaped in this mold — and their rapidly growing foreign commerce was so well organized that the Germans in the markets of the world were like an invading army.<sup>2</sup>

The usual description of Germany, as ruled by a military caste, was all wrong. It is true that the whole system was interlocked with militarism, but it was the whole German nation that had deliberately made of itself a remorseless machine, with an absolute faith in the efficiency of such mechanism; and it cannot any longer be doubted that all classes of Germans had become united in this faith.

This all-pervading system had molded the German ideals and the German philosophies. It was claimed by the Germans that this German Kultur was the strongest force in the world, and, as such, was entitled to rule the world. This doctrine was preached with a fanatical contempt for weaker nations and all other modes of living. From these convictions had come

<sup>1</sup> "Those who had behind them the glories of 1870." Bethmann-Hollweg.

<sup>2</sup> A very able report, "German Military Power and Its Relation to Internal Development and Foreign Policies", by Colonel Samuel G. Shartle, U. S. A., can be found at the War College. It was also published in No. 1 of *National Defense Magazine* (1911).

a ruthless purpose to seize upon world power, that was held to be Germany's rightful spoil, — a self-centered and self-justified ambition, which became a most dangerous menace to the world after Germany had been allowed to gain strength and to muster all the resources of this system for an effort to gain dominion by arms.

In 1879 the alliance with Austria-Hungary had been made, which became the Triple Alliance when joined by Italy, but Great Britain at that time was still influenced by anti-Russian policies. Taking full advantage of this, Germany was able to cement together the Teutonic countries, under the absolute control of Germany, to gain also dominating influence over Turkey, and to make undisturbed preparation for a German war to gain world power. These plans were made almost openly, and they were accompanied by a campaign of German propaganda, all over the world, to strengthen German interests. The result of all this was a military preparation such as had never been known, not only with all the resources that Germany could command prepared for a great military effort, but with the full intention of using this military strength at the first favorable occasion. This situation brought on the war inevitably. The much discussed incidents before the war merely served as the excuse for putting the matured German military plans into effect.

The military position was a direct consequence of this course of events and was favorable for Germany. An outstanding military advantage was the geographic situation, with the Teutonic powers in an ideal central position for delivering powerful attacks on separated enemies.<sup>1</sup> All the road and railway transportation

<sup>1</sup> "At the present moment Germany and Austria-Hungary . . . have the same advantage of central and concentrated positions against the Triple Entente, Russia, France, and Great Britain." Admiral Mahan in "Mahan on Naval Warfare." Allan Westcott.

of the countries had been carefully planned for this purpose, and the value of this means of disposing the Austro-German forces cannot be stated too strongly. Not only could troops be shifted with astonishing rapidity to any part of a line of operations, but they could be transported from one front to another in a time that would have been thought impossible before this war. An American army observer<sup>1</sup> states that a complete division could be transported from one front to another in a week, including the entraining and detraining.

Even after the failure of the first great German offensive, when the Central Powers were fighting to break through encircling enemies, this element of interior communication multiplied the effectiveness of their forces.

With this great factor in favor of the German plan, the German military leaders could be sure that, at the outbreak of war, a correspondingly disadvantageous situation would exist for the Entente Allies. For the Allies there was practically no communication possible between the East and the West. Russia would be separated from France and Great Britain by the interposition of Turkey, whose allegiance had been carefully secured by Germany. Consequently there would be an isolated enemy force on the west of the Central Powers and another on the east. The German military plan, matured through years of preparation, was to attack in detail, — first France, then Russia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Samuel G. Shartle, U. S. A.

<sup>2</sup> "... But one plan of war, based on the supposition that a war for Germany would necessarily be a war on two fronts.

"Their plan was a quick and forcible offensive to the West, during which the defensive positions of German troops in the East would develop into what would be, after the expected success in the West, an offensive against Russia on a large scale." Bethmann-Hollweg.

"The plan of campaign which was inaugurated in August, 1914, was conceived by General Count von Schlieffen, one of the greatest soldiers who ever lived." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

The German military leaders were convinced that a quick decision<sup>1</sup> could be won against each in turn by the massed attack of the full strength of the highly organized German armies. Then an isolated England would be dealt with at leisure, with dominion of Europe and the "Bridge to the East" assured.

Other elements were also favorable for this scheme. The Balkan Slav States had been split up by carefully fostered jealousies, and there was no possibility of their uniting against the Teutons. Although it was known that the Italian feeling against Austria would prevent Italy from casting her lot with the Teutonic allies, yet it was also known that Italy would not declare war against Germany at the outbreak of hostilities. The European field was thus clear for the successive attacks on France and Russia.

The one fixed condition in the military situation that was against Germany, was the unalterable fact that control of the sea rested with Germany's enemies, without any hope of Germany's winning it away from them. This adverse factor, as the war went on, counted more and more against Germany, and in the end was the greatest contributing force in the defeat of the Germans. In fact The World War has again demonstrated the controlling influence of Sea Power, a doctrine which will be kept before the eyes of the reader of this book. But it must be admitted that control of the sea would not have been a factor of the same importance, if the German version of the military problem had proved correct. If, as confidently calculated by the Germans, France had been overwhelmed at the first onslaught, it is hard to see how Sea Power would have saved the European situation. The

<sup>1</sup> In the assumed military situation, as countless war-games had abundantly demonstrated, an offensive against Russia, with simultaneous operations in the West, implied, as a matter of course, a long war, and was therefore rejected by Count von Schlieffen. "Ludendorff's Own Story."



German leaders felt assured of the success of the coup they had planned, and they were confident that the unfavorable element of Sea Power could be ignored. Consequently the carefully planned blow was launched against France, in full conviction that it would succeed as decisively as did the invasion of 1870, and that the rest of the program would be completed before naval power of the Allies could count against Germany.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"... our hope of forcing a decision by overthrowing our enemies by a few great blows, the product of an extreme concentration of effort and complete disregard of all secondary issues." The German General Staff and its Decisions, Falkenhayn.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GERMAN GREAT GENERAL STAFF

#### THE PLAN OF WAR OF 1914

AFTER the astonishing victory in the War of 1870 won by the German Great General Staff, of which Moltke was the directing genius, it is not strange that the German nation had accepted the doctrine that the way to attain its ambition was through the use of the same means. This had become the main reliance of the German Empire, and at the outbreak of the war in 1914 the Germans had the most perfected General Staff in all history. To its guidance they unhesitatingly committed their cause.

The "Kultur" organization of Germany, military, social, scientific, and commercial, at this time, will be one of the marvels of history. All the different elements in the country were working together. The nation was absolutely united in its misguided ambition. The organization of the German army was as efficient as can be imagined. Yet over this wonderful organization was the controlling power of the General Staff that from its very perfection made the first failure of the war.

Theoretically the German Great General Staff was the most efficient machine ever put together. All combinations of warfare had been analyzed, and a distorted version of the Moltke strategy had been carried to plus infinity. When the war broke out there was no suspicion in the German mind that the

product of this machine was not in the least like the strategy of the Moltke of 1870. On the contrary, with the Moltke of 1914 as its Chief, the Great General Staff of 1914 was believed to be infallible, — an improved and perfected edition of the Great General Staff of 1870. Yet, strangely enough, the plans of the German Staff of 1914, while attempting to imitate the campaign of 1870, violated the fundamental precept laid down by the victorious Moltke of 1870.

The statement of his doctrine by the great general in his own account of the War of 1870 between France and Germany<sup>1</sup> is clear :

“It is a delusion to believe that a plan of war may be laid for a prolonged period and carried out in every point. The first collision with the enemy changes the situation entirely, according to the result.”

Yet the very thing that the Moltke of 1870 had called a delusion — “a plan of war laid for a prolonged period” — had become a part of the creed of the German Staff of 1914, because of the constant working out of war problems from one side of the board, with fixed conditions. Their campaigns had been reduced to a railroad time-table basis. It was forgotten how suddenly and completely an accident will upset a railroad schedule.

To see how far this was from the real strategy of the War of 1870 one has only to study Moltke's account of the Franco-German War. The most impressive feature is the flexibility of his plans, and the ease with which he changed to meet new conditions<sup>2</sup> without confusion or delay in the effective use of his armies.

Moltke's account of his great campaign in the War of 1870 is as simple and direct as Cæsar's *Commen-*

<sup>1</sup> “The Franco-German War of 1870-1871.” Helmuth von Moltke.

<sup>2</sup> “The siege of Metz had formed no part of the original plan of campaign — and this necessitated a complete redistribution of the army.” Moltke, 1870.

taries. “By whatever special means these plans were to be accomplished was left to the decision of the hour; *the advance to the frontiers alone was preordained in every detail.*” “The orders for marching and traveling by rail or boat were worked out for each division of the army, together with the most minute directions as to their different starting points, the day and hour of departure, the duration of the journey, the refreshment stations, the place of destination. At the meeting place cantonments were assigned to each corps and division, stores and magazines were established, and thus, when war was declared, it needed only the royal signature to set the entire apparatus in motion with undisturbed precision. There was nothing to be changed in the directions originally given; it sufficed to carry out the plans prearranged and prepared.”

It will be observed that all this ended in the perfect mobilization of the troops at the frontiers. Beyond the frontiers the armies were to be used against the enemy as circumstances might direct. “The mobilized forces were divided into three independent armies on a basis worked out by the General of the Prussian Staff.” It is evident that these armies of 1870 were not restricted to definite plans. Instead of anything of the kind, the Moltke of 1870 planned to have his armies in hand ready to move in any direction, and to strike whenever he might see the right opportunity.

“ . . . But, above all, the plan of war was based on the resolve to attack the enemy at once, wherever found, and keep the German forces so compact that a superior force could always be brought into the field.”<sup>1</sup>

Nothing could be more removed from a fixed program than this. Yet in the minds of the German

<sup>1</sup> Moltke, 1870.



Staff of 1914 "plans prearranged and prepared" had been extended far beyond Moltke's mobilization at the frontier. It had become the fashion for military experts to think of campaigns and battles in the enemy's territories as mathematically calculated — and most of this had been done by taking the great Moltke's name in vain. But so imbued was the group of German military leaders with the supposedly infallible teachings and plannings of years, that the possibility of error was not admitted, and the German Great General Staff was supremely confident of the result. It believed that the problem had been worked out in advance, and that a quick victory was a mathematical certainty. The plans had been made by which France was to be overwhelmed in a few weeks, Russia to be held in check, and then defeated in turn. This was the culmination of the years of German preparation. The dispute between Austria-Hungary and Serbia was seized upon by Germany as the opportunity for war. There was no attempt at conciliation — and the German assault was launched first at France, as planned, disregarding any question of the justice of such an attack. There was no thought of anything but pursuing the German scheme for German control of the world.<sup>1</sup>

War was declared by Germany on Russia August 1, on France August 3, and the carefully prepared machinery was at once set in motion to conquer France. When called upon, the German armies were mobilized in 1914 with the same perfection of organization and

<sup>1</sup> "On July 30, when Count Berchtold wanted to give way, we, without Austria having been attacked, replied to Russia's mobilization by sending an ultimatum to St. Petersburg, and . . . we declared war on the Russians, although the Czar had pledged his word that as long as negotiations continued not a man should march — so that we deliberately destroyed the possibility of a peaceful settlement.

"In view of the indisputable facts it is not surprising that the whole civilized world outside of Germany attributes to us the sole guilt of the war." Prince Lichnowski.

equipment that signalized the mobilization of 1870, — but in 1914 the "prearranged" plan went far beyond the frontier, and instead of the mobile armies of 1870, there was a continuation of the plotted-out schedule. The German plan of war of 1914 was a repetition of the German plan of 1870, which was directed against the French armies, but always with the ultimate object of the capture of Paris. This goal of his strategy was emphasized by the Moltke of 1870 in no uncertain words. He described his plan as "fixed from the first upon the enemy's capital, the possession of which is of more importance in France than in other countries."<sup>1</sup>

In 1914 the plan of war of the German Great General Staff also had for its military objective the French armies. It was again the German aim to "attack the enemy at once"<sup>2</sup> with overwhelming momentum, as in the War of 1870, but again the ultimate goal of the German strategy was the possession of Paris. This must be kept in mind to understand the strategy of the German drive in 1914. Their constant effort was to smash and thrust aside the French armies, in order that they might occupy Paris. It is wrong to say that the Germans were attempting the capture of the French capital as their one military objective. Their plan was first to deal with the French armies, but their firm belief was that to take Paris, with an enormous levy of money upon the city, would again paralyze France, as in 1870.

It is probably true that the loss of the French capital in 1914 would have had a serious physical and moral effect, as in the Franco-German War of 1870. It must be admitted that success in winning this final goal would have justified the strategy of the Germans, but the execution of this plan of war had been committed for years to a new "opening" — to borrow a

<sup>1</sup> Moltke, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

term from chess. Instead of making a direct invasion of France, across the border between the two countries, the German Great General Staff had deliberately planned, in defiance of international law and with full intention of breaking all treaties, to invade France through neutral Belgium, with a supporting army in Luxemburg. This had been plotted out for years in advance,<sup>1</sup> and all their machinery of mobilization and invasion had been tied fast to this plan, to avoid the difficult frontier terrain and the theoretical strength of the French frontier fortresses.

In the years preceding the war formal fortresses had been given a high artificial value in all European military calculations. The use of steel and concrete, following the systems of Brialmont and kindred engineers, with mushroom turret mounts and encircling supporting forts, had again deluded the military experts into the belief that defense had advanced beyond the assaults of artillery, and fortresses would be strong points in the positions of armies. All over Europe were scattered "impregnable" fortresses. These fortresses were all great factors in the preconceived war game, — and none fulfilled expectations when it came to the actual test of war.

Here was the failure of the German Staff. These French frontier fortresses had been considered so strong that direct attacks on them were thought to be out of the question, and the drive through Belgium was the German solution of the problem. The German Staff made two errors. They apparently did not

<sup>1</sup> "To my certain knowledge, for a long time our military leaders had figured on but one plan of war. . . . To attain success in the Western offensive, the military leaders deemed it absolutely necessary to march through Belgium. Political and military interests clashed in this situation. The injustice to Belgium was never doubted. And the general political effects of this injustice could clearly be seen. The Chief of General Staff, General von Moltke, was not blind to this, but declared the military necessity of the march through Belgium absolute." Bethmann-Hollweg.

realize that in their new heavy howitzers<sup>1</sup> they possessed a weapon that would make the French fortresses of little value, and they failed to calculate on a resistance from the Belgians. No serious opposition had been expected to the passage through Belgium. Instead of this, the Belgians made a stout resistance at Liège, and in the over-confident plans of the German Staff there was no immediate provision for heavy artillery to reduce the Belgian fortresses. Guns were brought up after a while, but there was a clogging of the perfect machinery, and there was an interruption before the invasion of France. Seldom has an interruption been so costly. The actual delay was slight. The impression at the time of long delays in Belgium was wrong, and should be corrected. But every day of time was of value to France. The united response of the French people was wonderful; and the German drive was beaten off.

This defeat of the plan of the German Staff was all the more bitter because of the failure to make the best use of their new artillery. The destruction of all fortresses which have been bombarded by these guns has been the wonder of the war.<sup>2</sup> Nothing has been able to resist them. Yet, although it is evident that the element of surprise is most valuable when an army has a new weapon, the surprise of their deadly assault was wasted on Belgian and outlying fortresses.

If, instead of the invasion of Belgium, this fearful force had been suddenly turned on the French frontier fortresses, the French would have given early contact to the German assaults, prepared to resist the invaders by relying upon the formal fortresses as strong positions

<sup>1</sup> This new artillery consisted, for the most part, of howitzers from the Skoda Austrian shops.

<sup>2</sup> "This war had brought about many surprises. We had seen fortresses reputed throughout Europe to be impregnable collapsing after a few days' attack by field armies." Winston Churchill, in testimony before Royal Commissioners.



in conjunction with their armies. There would have been no warning and no time to change to American intrenching tactics.<sup>1</sup> But, after the object lesson in Belgium, the French formal fortresses on the Western front were converted into Petersburg intrenchments, the only defense against such guns.<sup>2</sup>

Another costly error of the German Staff was the carefully argued conclusion that Russia would not be able to mobilize and take the offensive for months. Instead of this, there was suddenly an invasion of East Prussia by the Russians that actually started an exodus of the inhabitants. This compelled the German General Staff to employ in East Prussia, to meet this Russian invasion, troops much needed at the critical stage of the campaign against France. This enforced diversion of German troops to the Eastern front was an adverse factor of no small importance when all available German forces were needed in France, and when the result of the campaign hung in the balance. Consequently the Russian raid into East Prussia must be counted as one of the causes of German defeat in France.

Another result of the unexpectedly rapid mobilization of the Russians was the inability of the Austrians to hold the Russian armies on their frontier. There was also a Russian invasion of Galicia, which soon began to make gains of Austrian territory. Consequently not only was the long-cherished German plan to overwhelm France defeated, but Russia had at once become a factor in the military situation. The military events of this double defeat of the plans of the German Great General Staff will be given in following chapters.

<sup>1</sup> "American Tactics in the World War." Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> "But the day of the ring fortress is past. It cannot stand against modern artillery and its scale of munitionment, and must give place to something else. Land fortifications will soon be necessary, but they will assume the character of long fortified lines." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

## CHAPTER III

### THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE OF 1914<sup>1</sup>

#### MILITARY EVENTS OF ATTEMPT TO OVERWHELM FRANCE AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1914

As has been said, the German military plan was to strike in detail, first at France, then at Russia. It was explained in the preceding chapter that the first part of this program, the attack on France, had been committed for years to an invasion through neutral Belgium. When war was declared (Germany *v.* Russia, August 1; Germany *v.* France, August 3; Germany *v.* Belgium, August 4) there was no thought of changing this plan in any way, nor any doubt as to the success of such a carefully arranged schedule.

The German forces brought into being for the assault on France were made up and placed as follows: On the extreme right, in the region of Aix-la-Chapelle, northeast of Belgium, was the German First Army, General Kluck; next in line the Second Army, General Bülow, near Linberg. These two armies, operating together, were to form the German right wing. In the center, ranged in order from west to east, were the army of Duke Albrecht of Württemberg; the army of the German Crown Prince; the army of the Crown Prince of Bavaria.<sup>2</sup> These three armies in the

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 1 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> An additional German army under General Hausen was formed soon after, which was placed between the armies of Bülow and Duke Albrecht.

center were grouped upon the Neuchâtel-Metz line, and occupied Luxemburg. The army of General Heeringin was in the vicinity of Strassburg in Alsace, and formed the German left.

Following the program of the German Great General Staff, these armies were mobilized with faultless efficiency, and they were ready, upon the declaration of war, to begin the invasion of France, as planned in advance. The First Army of Kluck, and the Second Army of Bülow, forming the German right wing, were prepared to move through Belgium against the French left. The three armies in the center were to advance through the Ardennes upon the Central Meuse, and against the sector of Verdun. The German army of General Heeringin on the left was to oppose the expected French offensive in Alsace.

The movements of these German armies had been timed to follow the "Schlieffen plan" of a wide enveloping sweep through Belgium<sup>1</sup> against the Allied left. The expected dislocation of the Allied armies on the left was to be followed by a drive of the German armies against the central group of French armies, the whole manoeuvre pivoting upon Verdun.

This great machine was put in motion on the evening of August 3, and early on the fourth the vanguard of Kluck's army, commanded by General Emmich, began the fateful invasion of Belgium<sup>2</sup> by occupying Visé. Advancing from Visé, this force was before Liège on the afternoon of August 4. Here an over-confident presumption that there would be no serious resistance by the Belgians was evident. Liège was a modern ring fortification of about thirty-one miles in circumference, with six major and six minor forts. Yet it is known

<sup>1</sup> "The Schlieffen plan of attacking France through Belgium." Tirpitz, "My Memoirs."

<sup>2</sup> "Then came our greatest disaster; the German entry into Belgium." Count Czernin, "In the World War."

that the Germans planned to take Liège by a *coup de main*,<sup>1</sup> and they attempted an assault supported only by field artillery. This weak attack was repulsed by the Belgians, — and the Germans awoke to the fact that the Belgians intended to make a serious resistance against German invasion.

Siege howitzers of the new type were hastily brought up by the Germans, and under their bombardment it soon became apparent that a formal fortress was helpless against modern armor-piercing explosive shells with a great angle of fall. Given a fixed target, these guns marked a new era of destructive power. The supposedly invulnerable steel and concrete construction was not only of little value for defense, but such forts proved to be man-traps for their defenders. One fort fell at once on August 5. Three more were silenced on August 6, but there had not been preparation of this heavy artillery in sufficient numbers to overwhelm all the forts in short order, as was possible with these weapons. Consequently, although Liège was surrendered on August 7, the brave Belgian commander, General Leman, was enabled to withdraw into the northern forts, and to prolong resistance until August 15.

The resistance of Liège actually delayed for a short time the advance of the German right. Of more importance was the interruption of the scheduled movements of the Germans, who failed to accomplish all the results that had been planned for the armies of Kluck and Bülow; and the German armies did not establish a strong contact with the French armies, which were being gathered to meet the danger. After the fall of the last of the Liège forts, the Belgian army was only able to maintain a show of delaying resistance until August 20, when the army of the Belgians was

<sup>1</sup> "General von Emmich, who had been given the task of taking the fortress of Liège by surprise." Ludendorff.



brushed aside and forced to retreat into the fortress of Antwerp.

The advancing Germans occupied Brussels on the afternoon of August 20, and on the same evening began the bombardment of Namur, another ring fortress, of great reputed strength, which had been given an artificial value in the pre-war calculations of military experts. Such a fortress was expected to offer a long resistance to any artillery. On account of the delays at Liège, because of insufficient artillery preparations by the Germans, the power of the new weapon had not been fully appreciated, but at Namur the Germans did not make the same mistake. The encircling forts were reduced so quickly that it was evident, even to the most prejudiced military critic, that a new and dominating force had been added to the weapons of warfare. Instead of any long siege, the Germans were in Namur on August 22, and the last of the forts were only able to hold out until August 25.

Yet from the very fact of its abject failure, the fortress of Namur did a great service to the defenders of France. The lesson taught by the quick collapse of this formal fortress was so complete and unmistakable that it could not be doubted. As explained in the preceding chapter, by revealing the power of their new weapon the Germans made a costly tactical mistake. It was a just retribution for broken faith that the German invasion of Belgium not only produced a moral effect that was a serious factor against Germany in the war, but at the same time the most valuable German military secret had been disclosed. Without this object lesson in Belgium, there might have been a very different tactical use of the French armies. In fact, it is known that belief in the ability of Namur to resist the Germans had influenced the French plans. But, after the easy reduction of Namur, the writing

on the wall was too plain. It was what the French writer called "*dégringolade de forteresses*", — and the support of formal fortresses was no longer considered important in the positions of armies.

The delay itself in Belgium,<sup>1</sup> though only a matter of days, yet meant that the Germans were so many marches farther away from Paris, and that the French had correspondingly greater opportunity to bring their armies into position to resist the invasion. It also gave the French time to correct the offensive in Alsace, which had been undertaken on the outbreak of war.

Outside of the object of repelling any German attack in this region, it was natural that this invasion should have been attempted. The knowledge that French armies were actually on the soil of the lost provinces had a great moral effect on the French nation, and it was a response to the strong sentiment demanding the reconquest of the spoils of 1870, which was universal in France.<sup>2</sup>

The invading French troops had occupied Mülhausen on August 9, and their first successes aroused great enthusiasm throughout France. This French invasion probably had the effect of making the German Staff think the French were more ready than was the actual fact, and it was necessary to use a considerable force of German troops to check the invaders (Battle of Morhange, August 20, 1914). But there was never much opportunity for the French to accomplish results of importance, as the imminent danger of the German

<sup>1</sup> In defending the military value of the invasion of Belgium, the German leaders have attempted to show that there was no delay in Belgium. As has been said, the delay was short, but it is sufficient to point out that the Germans invaded Belgium on August 4, and they did not occupy Brussels until August 20.

<sup>2</sup> "The recollection of 1870 and Alsace-Lorraine, the longing to make good the defeat of forty years ago, remained a potent factor in the French policy. This factor always had fateful possibilities." Bethmann-Hollweg.

drive through Belgium overshadowed everything else. It was at once necessary that the forces of the French should be concentrated to meet this menace, and troops were diverted to strengthen the French armies in the center and on the left flank which had been swung forward into Belgium. The Germans had also felt the need of stronger forces in the same regions, and a new German army had been formed under the command of General Hausen. This army had been moved to the west, and placed between the central group of German armies and the Second Army of Bülow. Thus, by the action of both sides, the sectors east of Verdun became comparatively inactive and remained so for a great part of the war, the French still occupying a small area of the territory lost in 1870.

The choice of the French nation for the chief command, General Joffre, was an ideal man for this great emergency. General Joffre had all the qualifications necessary for such a task, with the personality and temperament needed to organize armies for a retiring fight, to maintain their organization, to gather all available strength,—and with all this the French Commander-in-Chief possessed the ability to strike when he felt that his armies had become strong enough to warrant an offensive. Joffre had been given plenary powers. In fact, he had practically been made a dictator, and he used his power wisely in pruning away the dead wood from the line and staff of the French army, as he organized it for defense against the Germans.

In the meantime, Great Britain had unfalteringly stood by her treaty pledges to Belgium. Upon the repudiation by Germany of the treaty to respect the neutrality of Belgium, which was called by the German Minister a "scrap of paper", and after the refusal by Germany to abandon the invasion of Belgium, Great Britain declared war. (Official, August 4, 11 P.M.)

Lord Kitchener was made Minister of War on August 5, with even greater dictatorial powers than those given to General Joffre in France. It was recognized that to send British troops to coöperate with the Belgian army would be to waste their effort, but that it would be of real value to send a British army to join the French forces in Belgium. All available British troops were at once prepared for transportation across the Channel, and on August 17 it was officially announced that the British army was on the Continent, moving to the support of the French armies in Belgium. This British army was a highly trained force of professional soldiers (about 80,000), and it was commanded by General French, Lord Kitchener's lieutenant in South Africa. On August 21 General French's army was in position near Mons in Belgium on the left of the French armies.

At this time there were five French armies in line numbered in order from east to west. The French left had been swung forward into Belgium, and it rested near Charleroi in touch with the British at Mons. In this region of Charleroi the first engagement with the advancing Germans took place (August 22) and the British army was also engaged (Mons, August 23).

It soon became evident to the French commander that the German thrust was too powerful to be checked by the forces at his command in his advanced positions. As explained, the fortress of Namur had been relied upon to make a delaying resistance, while General Joffre gathered his strength, but this aid had been found wanting. It clearly was necessary for the French general not only to abandon all thoughts of an offensive for the time being, but to give up any idea of holding his ground in Belgium. Convinced of this, General Joffre ordered a retreat, and he began to fight a cool, wary, retiring battle, falling back successively from the lines of the Meuse and Aisne (Au-



gust 23-28). All this time he was gathering his strength and preparing to take the offensive in turn when the right opportunity came.

These movements were not merely the acts of a general forced to retreat. This fact is proved by General Joffre's instructions to his army commanders in the order dated the night of August 25. This general order gave explicit directions to his subordinates for the manœuvres which were to follow. The first paragraph is very remarkable:

"It being impossible to execute the offensive movement which had been projected, the subsequent operations will be carried out in a manner to constitute on our left by the united strength of the 4th and 5th armies, the British army, and new troops gathered in the eastern region, a massed force capable of taking the offensive, while the other armies will for the necessary time hold in check the efforts of the enemy."

This order effectually disposes of any idea that General Joffre's later change to the offensive came only from mistakes of his enemy and from lucky chances. It is evident that from August 25 his tactics were carefully planned with an offensive in view, — and, in fact, the paragraph noted is as good an account of what afterwards actually happened as if it had been written after the event. Seldom has there been a record of forethought on the part of a general that was so fully confirmed by the result on the field of battle.

In the successive withdrawals the French armies lost heavily, but they did not lose their morale, neither were they impaired to such an extent that they had lost the power to fight back when called upon.

The British army, which was on the extreme left flank as described, had overstayed its battle at the beginning of the retreat (Mons, August 23), and in addi-

tion it had been divided into two parts by a forest as it fell back. This had separated the two corps of General French's army by a gap of "some eight miles",<sup>1</sup> and consequently the divided British army had been under great pressure from superior German forces. The Second Corps, after being thus isolated, lost heavily by becoming involved in a battle against superior numbers at Le Cateau.<sup>2</sup> In consequence, although the British army offered gallant resistance, it was badly cut up in the retreat.

The rapid onrush of the Germans seemed irresistible, and, in the first days of September, when General Joffre withdrew still farther to the region of the Marne, and the French Government left Paris for Bordeaux, many thought that the German drive was sure of success. But it must be remembered that, as the German armies advanced, it became increasingly difficult for them to maintain their momentum. The German Staff, in its eagerness to hurl the massed German forces against the French, had failed to hold an army reserve. In addition to the exhaustion due to their continued rapid movements, the Germans were getting farther away from their bases all the time, and the task of supplying the armies as well as keeping the ranks filled grew harder day by day. On the other hand, the French were being correspondingly helped, as they drew back into their own territory. They were nearer their bases, and General Joffre, with these advantages, was also gathering new forces as announced in his order.

The French general had formed two new armies, the Sixth and the "Ninth." The "Ninth" Army, com-

<sup>1</sup> "A gap of some eight miles existed between the right of the Second Corps at Le Cateau and the left of the First Corps at Landrecies." "1914", Lord French.

<sup>2</sup> The actual result was a total loss of at least fourteen thousand officers and men, about eighty guns, numbers of machine guns, as well as quantities of ammunition, war material and baggage. "1914", Lord French.

manded by General Foch, the future Commander-in-Chief, was placed by General Joffre between the Fourth and Fifth armies to strengthen the center. The new Sixth Army, General Manoury, was moved widely to the left beyond the British army, so that the latter was no longer the left flank of the armies opposing the Germans. The skillful use of these two new armies by General Joffre made a great change in the military situation, as he had by this means created the new "massed force" ready for an offensive, which he had promised in his general order.

The retreat had really meant swinging the French left back with Verdun as a pivot. East of Verdun there was heavy fighting on the Nancy sector in the first days of September, but the French lines held, and there was no change in the military situation. West of Verdun the armies were now arranged in order from east to west: Third Army, General Sarrail; Fourth Army, General Langle de Cary; "Ninth" Army, General Foch; Fifth Army, General d'Espérey; British Army, General French; Sixth Army, General Manoury.

General Kluck, who commanded the army on the extreme right of the German forces, knowing the badly battered condition of the British army, and consequently believing that his own right flank would be safe from attack, turned his army sharply to the southeast to join the massed attack which the Germans were about to make upon the central group of the French armies.

All the energies of the Germans were concentrated upon their preconceived military objective — which at the time they felt sure of accomplishing — to give the finishing blow to the French armies that would leave Paris an easy prey. There was no place in the German strategy for any variation from this plotted-out schedule, no thought of seizing upon the Channel

ports, which were at their mercy.<sup>1</sup> The loss of this strip of coast would have done far-reaching damage to the cause of the Allies, and in the fall of 1914, when it was too late, the Germans fought hard for it. But at this stage of the great offensive the German Staff was obsessed by their preordained plan of war. The German Command believed that the Schlieffen envelopment of the Allied left wing had gained results that assured the success of the final coup.

It was true, as the German Command believed, that the British army was in no condition for immediate aggressive action after its great losses in the Allied retreat,<sup>2</sup> and Kluck's right flank was in no serious danger from the British in the movement he had undertaken. But the Germans had not realized that there was a new factor in the situation, the Sixth French Army, which had become the Allied left wing, instead of the British army;<sup>3</sup> and the Sixth Army was at this time in position to deliver an attack upon the German right flank, which Kluck had thought secure from any such danger.

The movement of Kluck's army to the southeast was known to the French Command, September 3, and General Joffre felt that at last the conditions were ripe for the French offensive as planned. On September 5 he announced to his officers that the retreat was ended, and that all his armies would take the of-

<sup>1</sup> "So long as the army hoped to capture Paris, I waited for the coast to fall into our hands of itself. I leave undiscussed the question whether it would not have been right to treat the coast as the objective from the start." Tirpitz, "My Memoirs."

<sup>2</sup> "... The shattered condition of the Army, and the far reaching effect of our losses at the Battle of Le Cateau was felt seriously even throughout the subsequent Battle of the Marne and during the early operations on the Aisne." "1914", Lord French.

<sup>3</sup> "The Germans were ignorant of the real strength which was gathering north of Paris in the formation of the Sixth Army. They regarded the British Army as practically crushed and almost useless as a fighting force." "1914", Lord French.



fensive, preparations for which were made at once. On September 6 the Sixth French Army was thrown against the right of General Kluck's army at the River Ourcq.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by a general offensive of all the French armies west of Verdun (Battle of the Marne).

General Kluck managed to change the front of his army to meet the attacks of the French Sixth Army in the regions of the Ourcq, and he held his own for more than two days, repulsing the French attempts to drive him from his position. There was also heavy pressure on the other French armies, especially the "Ninth" Army of General Foch in the center, and on September 9 the fortune of the battle still hung in the balance. But the dislocation of General Kluck's army, facing to meet the Sixth French Army, compelled Bülow, next in the German line, to draw back to keep alignment with Kluck's army. By this withdrawal the Fifth French Army, General d'Espérey, was less heavily engaged, and on September 9 General d'Espérey was able to detach a corps to reinforce General Foch's "Ninth" Army on his right, which was very hard pressed.

By skilfully using this corps to strengthen his army, Foch was able to move his own 42d Division into a sudden attack which pierced the German line, followed up by a general attack with his army. This was the manoeuvre of La Fère-Champenoise, and the German army of Hausen was forced to retire in confusion. The armies of Kluck and Bülow were also compelled to give way, and the day's fighting resulted in the retreat of the German armies to positions previously prepared along the River Aisne, where intrenchments had been laid out to provide a secure retreat in case of an emergency.

Outside of the demoralization of the army of Hausen there was no German rout. The armies of Kluck

MAP NO. 1. THE WESTERN FRONT  
(August-September, 1914)

THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE AGAINST FRANCE  
(This map is diagrammatic only)

Arrows indicate the wide sweep of the Schlieffen enveloping movement against the Allied left and the attack on the center.

..... Line of the Allied armies with their left swung forward into Belgium, before the battles of Charleroi (August 22) and Mons (August 23).

① Move of Kluck's army to the southeast.

— Allied armies in position (September 5) before the Battle of the Marne (September 6-10), all armies west of Verdun engaged:

3. Third French Army, General Sarrail.
4. Fourth French Army, General Langle de Cary,
9. "Ninth" French Army, General Foch,
5. Fifth French Army, General d'Espérey,
- B. British Army, General French,
6. Sixth French Army, General Manoury.

~ German armies in position (September 5) before the Battle of the Marne, all armies west of Verdun engaged:

- C.P. Army of German Crown Prince.
- A.W. Army of Duke Albrecht of Württemberg,
- H. Army of General Hausen,
- B. Army of General Bülow,
- K. Army of General Kluck.

xxxxx Line of the Aisne to which the Germans retreated (September 10-12) after the Battle of the Marne.





and Bülow were able to make good their retreat. But the plan of the German Great General Staff was absolutely defeated. It was like Antietam in our Civil War. The defeat on the field of battle was not disastrous, yet the whole far-reaching objective of the German campaign was so decisively beaten that there was no question of renewing the attempt. It is by military results that a battle must be measured, not by what happens on the field, and judged by this test the Battle of the Marne was decisive. Then and there the decision was forced that, instead of a quick, overwhelming victory by a well-prepared military power,<sup>1</sup> the war would be a long hard struggle for supremacy.<sup>2</sup>

*The failure of the German Strategy of the attempt to overwhelm France in 1914.* It is always a good thing to state a problem in its simplest terms. In the many discussions of this campaign, the writer has not seen any attempt to make such a characterization of the admitted failure of German strategy, which might be thus described. In 1914 established conditions enabled Germany to produce a strong military force at the outset. Time was required by the Allies, to produce an equal military force and to make use of Sea Power. Consequently there was an initial military superiority for Germany, and the strategic object of the Germans was to impose their superior force at once with destructive effect upon the Allied armies. This well prepared German military superiority would only be able to gain its necessary quick victory, if brought into immediate crushing contact with the less prepared armies of the Allies. The elaborate Schlieffen enveloping movement, through Belgium, did not produce this essential result, of imposing the German armies in destructive contact upon the Allied armies, until after the Allies had gathered sufficient forces to fight an equal battle — and, in the words of Falkenhayn, "the intention of forcing a speedy decision, which had hitherto been the foundation of the German plan of campaign, had come to naught."

<sup>1</sup> "Until then the army had been animated by one idea: Cannæ." Tirpitz, "My Memoirs."

(Hannibal's victory at Cannæ was a text in the Schlieffen doctrine, and one of his most important books was called "Cannæ.")

<sup>2</sup> The Chief of the German General Staff, Moltke, broke down after the Battle of the Marne, and Falkenhayn succeeded him on September 14, 1914. This change was kept secret to prevent "further ostensible proof of the completeness of the victory obtained on the Marne." "The German General Staff and its Decisions," Falkenhayn.

## CHAPTER IV

MILITARY EVENTS ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT<sup>1</sup>

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1914

At the same time that the plans of the German Staff were being defeated in France, German calculations had been proved wrong as to Russia. The German Staff had not thought it possible that Russia would be a dangerous factor in the war until Germany had finished the campaign of invasion in France. The Russian communications were known to be bad, and Russia was lacking in artillery and supplies of all kinds. It was assumed that the attempts of the Russians to mobilize armies would result in confusion and delay.

These assumptions proved to be wrong. The preliminary orders to mobilize the Russian armies had been given about July 25, and, in spite of the disadvantages mentioned, the Russian troops were collected with great rapidity. War was declared upon Russia by Germany August 1, yet by the middle of August, Russian armies were on the frontier ready to take the field. The Russian Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas, had so placed his armies that they became at once a menace to the Central Powers. In the north there were two Russian armies on the frontier of East Prussia, the Army of the Niemen, General Rennenkampf, and the Army of the Narew, General Samsonoff. On the border of the project-

ing Poland salient was an army intended to act on the defensive to guard against an invasion of Poland (General Ivanoff). South of this force, on the frontier of Galicia, were the armies of General Russky and General Brusiloff, prepared to take the offensive against the Austrians.

As soon as it became evident that Germany's efforts were being concentrated on the campaign in France and that few troops had been left to guard East Prussia, the two northern Russian armies began an invasion of East Prussia, in agreement with the French. The frontier was crossed on August 17. General Rennenkampf's army aimed for Königsberg, while General Samsonoff moved in the direction of Danzig. August 20 General Rennenkampf defeated the Germans at Gumbinnen, occupying Insterberg August 23 and threatening to besiege Königsberg. General Samsonoff's army also penetrated far into the province. The advance of these Russian armies caused a great panic in East Prussia. People fled before the dreaded Cossacks, and refugees began to appear in Berlin. The whole province was said to be in the hands of the Russians as far as the River Vistula.

It was at once necessary for the German Staff to correct this situation. Outside of any military results, the fact that the Russians were overrunning East Prussia would have had a bad moral effect upon the Germans, who were united in their belief in a victorious war. In this emergency, by one of the strange chances that have occurred so often in history, the man was at hand suited to the occasion. In Hanover there was living in retirement General Hindenburg, an old German general who had made a special study of strategic and tactical conditions in East Prussia. He knew the country in which the Russian armies were operating as well as if it had been his own garden. In fact, he had prevented the East Prussian lakes and their

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 2 at the end of this chapter.



surrounding country from being improved for commercial purposes, so convinced was he of the strategic value of this lake region as a defense against invasion. He had studied and rehearsed every tactical use of the difficulties of the country as an aid to defending armies. Hindenburg had been out of favor with the German Emperor and the General Staff, but he was so evidently the right man for the emergency that the German General Staff appointed him to the command in East Prussia.

A French historian<sup>1</sup> states that the old general was in a café in Hanover, on August 22, when he received telegrams telling him that he had been given the command in East Prussia, that reinforcements were being hastened to his aid, and that General Ludendorff would report to him, to act as his Chief of Staff, with a special train to take him to East Prussia. Hindenburg met Ludendorff at four in the morning, and the two generals traveled together on the train. Thus began the association of Hindenburg and Ludendorff which was destined to found a new school of German tactics,<sup>2</sup> to supersede the German Great General Staff of 1914, and to do more harm to the cause of the Entente Allies than any other element in the German war machine.

In the afternoon of August 23 Hindenburg was in East Prussia, and he at once proceeded to solve his problem, as calmly and methodically as if he had been at military manoeuvres in his favorite lake region. The two advancing Russian armies played into his hand and gave him exactly the opportunity he needed to use the advantages of the terrain, — and his knowledge of the country. Both Russian generals had become over-confident on account of the weak opposi-

<sup>1</sup> Hanotaux.

<sup>2</sup> "It was the first time we had met. All other versions belong to the realm of fiction." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

tion the Germans had been able to offer. Rennenkampf was eager to capture Königsberg, the ancient seat of the Hohenzollerns. Samsonoff was equally intent on his objective. The armies were not very far apart, but they were separated by lakes and rough country, which made it impossible to join forces quickly. Once joined they would have been too strong for Hindenburg to defeat, and, realizing this, the German Command planned to attack the two Russian armies in detail.

Hindenburg decided to defeat first the army of Samsonoff, which was advancing through the treacherous lake region. Keeping only a screen in front of the army of Rennenkampf, he prepared positions on the line of Samsonoff's advance, engaging the Russian general with retiring bodies of troops to keep Samsonoff in the delusion that he was pushing through a weak opposition. Suddenly (August 26) the Russians, advancing on a wide front, encountered serious resistance. They had come to the prepared trap of Hindenburg. At first the center seemed to yield, and the Russian general pushed forward. Then there was pressure from the south on his left. Sending troops to overcome this, Samsonoff was surprised by a wide sweep of strong German forces on his right flank. For two days the Russians fought desperately against systematic attacks that closed in around their doomed army. On the third day Samsonoff was practically surrounded, his troops in a bewildering tangle of undergrowth, and his army a demoralized mass struggling in confusion. The fighting was protracted, but only the debris of an army escaped from the deadly circle.<sup>1</sup> It was one of the few cases in history of the complete destruction of an army in battle. Luden-

<sup>1</sup> "The widely circulated report that thousands of Russians were driven into the marshes and there perished is a myth; no marsh was to be found anywhere near." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

dorff states that Samsonoff shot himself, and that his widow identified his grave after the battle.

This was the Battle of Tannenberg, the first great victory of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, which is already considered a classic by military students. It was an able application of the Schlieffen doctrine, so highly esteemed by German military leaders, but in addition it was a masterly use of the terrain of the region in which the battle was fought. It made Hindenburg the popular hero of Germany, — and his triumph was well earned. But it must be said that the reckless conduct of the Russian invasion gave the German Command every opportunity to use these tactics. This battle has been very little known in the United States, as the public mind was too much occupied by the events in France.

Hindenburg did not delay in moving against the other Russian army, but General Rennenkampf did not share the fate of Samsonoff. Upon the disaster to the Narew Army, the other Russian army withdrew from the region of Königsberg. It was hard pressed by the relentless Hindenburg in the Battle of the Masurian Lakes, but Rennenkampf managed to make good his retreat to the frontier. The Russian general had lost heavily in men and material, but his army was still an organized force, to be reckoned with in the war situation.

Utter as had been the defeat of the Russian invasion of East Prussia, it had caused a diversion of troops from the campaign against France at the critical time when they were much needed; and, as has been stated, this was a contributing factor to the defeat of the German offensive in France. The German Staff had believed that it could spare two army corps, which were sent to reinforce the army in East Prussia, as 'on the Western front the victorious progress of the German armies was still unchecked.'<sup>1</sup> Any weakening

<sup>1</sup> Ludendorff.

of the German forces was costly at that stage of the campaign in France, when General Joffre, instead of being beaten as the German Command supposed, was preparing for his counterstroke.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime the southern group of Russian armies had won great results for the Entente Allies against the Austrians. The same over-confidence that had denuded East Prussia of troops was apparent in the preparations of the Austrians against the Russians. The Austrians also seemed to have no idea that the Russians would be able to take the offensive, and the appearance of mobilized Russian armies on their frontiers took them by surprise.

The Austro-Hungarian General Staff had made the mistake of dividing the Austrian armies. One army under General Auffenberg was held in the region of Lemberg, the other, commanded by General Dankl, was moved in the direction of Lublin to invade Poland from the south of the salient. An inadequate punitive expedition had been sent into Serbia, which the Serbs easily defeated (Jadar, August 16-20), and Austrian troops were being collected to make up a stronger force for a new invasion.

Trusting to the Russian army of defense in Poland to take care of General Dankl's Austrian army, the two Russian armies of Generals Russky and Brusiloff invaded Galicia to attack the Austrian army of General Auffenberg near Lemberg. The Russian armies outnumbered this Austrian army two to one, and the Austrians were crushingly defeated in the Battle of Lemberg (September 1-3), after Brusiloff had made a sweep to the south, on the Austrian right flank, capturing Halicz. The defeated Austrians were obliged to retreat from Lemberg, which was occupied

<sup>1</sup> "The decision to weaken the forces on the Western front was premature, but, of course, we in the East could not know that, for the reports from the West were favorable." "Ludendorff's Own Story."



by the Russians September 3. In this reverse the Austrian losses in men and material were so heavy that this army was crippled.

The army of Dankl had penetrated some distance into Poland, where it met stout resistance from Ivanoff's army, and, by the retreat of Auffenberg's broken army, Dankl's right was exposed on the south to the attacks of the Russian armies of Russky and Brusiloff. To attempt to maintain his advance position was to invite disaster. Being without any support in the south, he was obliged to retreat over the San, giving up Jaroslau. The shattered Austrian army of Auffenberg also retreated and passed across the Carpathians into Hungary.

In these short campaigns the Russian armies, instead of being negligible factors, had created a military situation by which German troops were needed in East Prussia, and, through the Russian defeats of the Austrians in Galicia, the Austrians were in need of assistance, instead of comfortably holding the Russians in check. All this had happened before the middle of September at the same time that the great German offensive in the West had been defeated at the Battle of the Marne. From this time begins an entirely different phase of the war.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The general situation of the Central Powers had become extremely difficult by the middle of September 1914." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

#### MAP No. 2. THE EASTERN FRONT

(August-September, 1914)

#### UNEXPECTED OFFENSIVES OF THE RUSSIANS

(This map is diagrammatic only)

#### THE INVASION OF EAST PRUSSIA

① Russian army of General Samsonoff (Army of the Narew) moving toward Danzig, destroyed at Battle of Tannenberg (August, 1914).

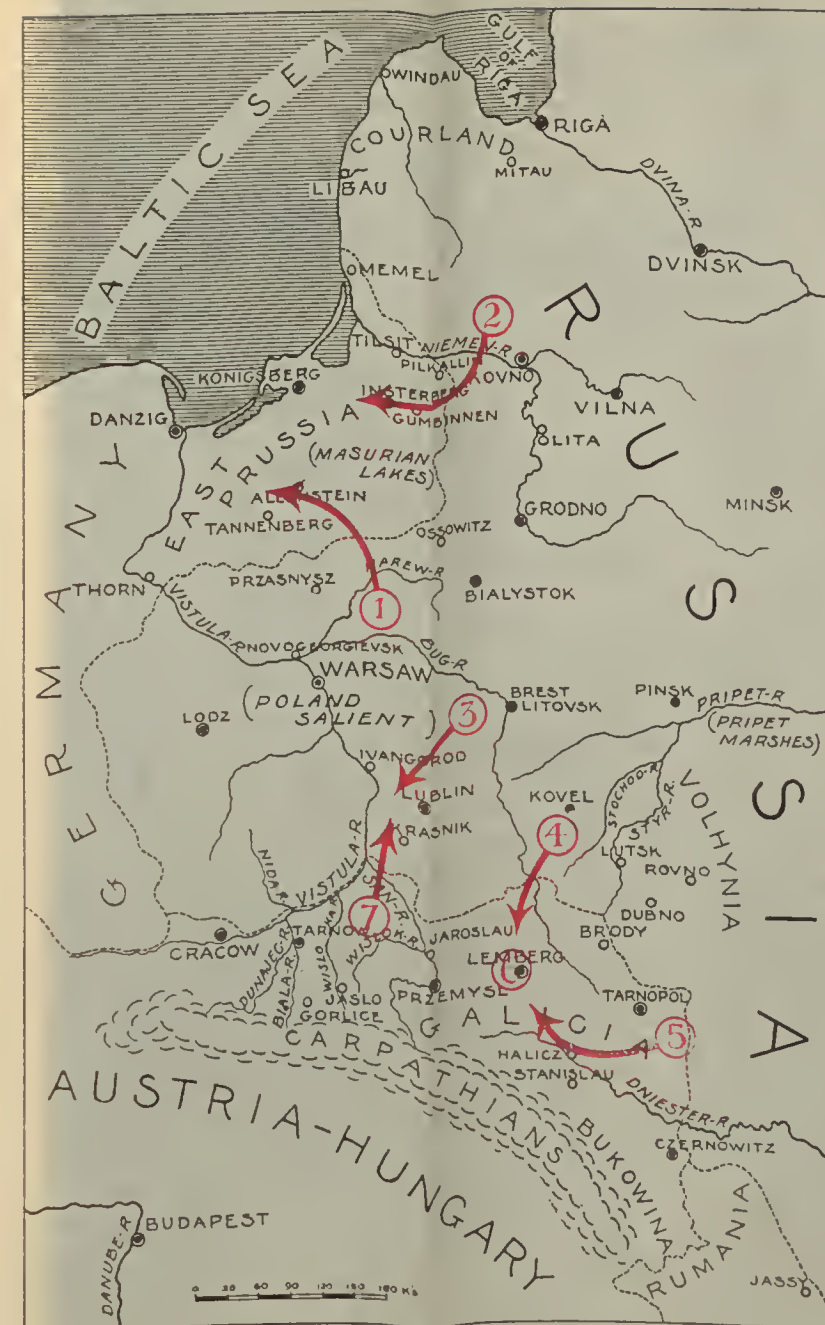
② Russian army of General Rennenkanipf (Army of the Nieman) moving toward Königsberg, defeated in the Battle of the Masurian Lakes, and driven out of East Prussia (September, 1914).

#### THE INVASION OF GALICIA

③ Russian army of General Ivanoff for the defense of Poland.

④ Russian army of General Russky, and ⑤ Russian army of General Brusiloff invaded Galicia. These two armies were joined, at the Battle of Lemberg ⑥ defeated the Austrian army of General Auffenberg and forced it to retreat across the Carpathians (September, 1914).

⑦ Austrian army of General Dankl, which attempted to invade Poland and was forced to retreat across the San after the Battle of Lemberg (September, 1914).



## CHAPTER V

### NEW MILITARY SITUATION AFTER THE DEFEAT OF THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE OF 1914<sup>1</sup>

#### THE INFLUENCE OF SEA POWER

By the defeat of the German plan of 1914 to overwhelm France, and through the events on the Russian front, a complete change had been brought about in the military situation in Europe. No longer could Germany take the offensive with any chance of delivering a decisive blow.<sup>2</sup> The opposing forces in France were too nearly equal for either side to establish a winning superiority at any point of attack, and in the East it was the Russians who first gained a superiority, not the Austrian allies of Germany. It was evident that the situation in the East had at the beginning become a drain upon the resources of Germany. The Russians were to be reckoned with on the German frontier, and Austria-Hungary needed to be strengthened to maintain the war against the Russian armies invading Galicia.

This meant that all the German forces could not any longer be concentrated against France. Troops and supplies must be diverted to the East. It was not apparent at the time, but in fact Germany had

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 3 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> "The intention of forcing a speedy decision which had hitherto been the foundation of the German plan of campaign had come to naught." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.



quickly lost the offensive, and military events had already shaped the war into a new form, — a long, protracted struggle to gather strength enough for one side or the other to force a decision.

The initial blow of the carefully prepared strength of Germany had failed, but its great proportions had already fixed the scale of the war of a magnitude undreamt before. There were about two million and a quarter men engaged at the Battle of the Marne. At the Battle of Leipsig, the "Battle of the Nations", the culmination of the forces evoked by the Napoleonic wars, the number of troops of all armies was 430,000 (Battle of Leipsig, October 16-19, 1813). It had taken many years devoted to the production of armies to furnish the numbers at Leipsig, and that was a decisive battle resulting in the overthrow of Napoleon. In 1914, a few short weeks formed armies of many times this number, facing one another with no possibility of an immediate decision.

From this time the war became an unending effort to maintain and strengthen these huge armies in the long struggle which followed, each side attempting to gain a superiority that would win a decision, and all the warring nations involved in expenditures of resources that were unprecedented. As soon as the war reached this stage the influence of Sea Power began to have an effect. Armies on the battle fields maintain their positions by being replenished with men and supplied with material. Even where recruits do not have to be transported by sea, the sea is the one greatest means of moving supplies, — and the nation cut off from the sea has always sooner or later felt the results of this deprivation.

This was the case with Germany in The World War. The Germans had failed to win the quick decision which they had thought would surely be obtained by their armies alone. After this failure, throughout

the war, they were to feel more and more the ill effects of the control of the seas by the Entente Allies.

At the very beginning the British Navy became the controlling force on the sea that had been predicted before the war. The great British battle fleet had been gathered in British waters before hostilities, and it had been kept mobilized on a pretext of naval manoeuvres. Consequently, when war was declared, the Grand Fleet was ordered to sea, and it at once took its station in the North Sea, where it dominated the situation and became the great factor in securing control of the seas. The German fleet was confined to its bases and made no attempt to engage the overpowering strength of the British Grand Fleet.

There had been much talk of German attempts to raid England, even of a serious invasion, but there is no evidence of any such plan on the part of the German Staff. In fact, it is clear that German efforts were concentrated on preparing for the blow against France, and there was no diversion of troops allowed for other projects. All the troops available in Germany were assembled for the plan of war of the German Great General Staff directed against France. Consequently the concentration of the British fleet in the North Sea must not be considered as defeating some mysterious German offensive against England,<sup>1</sup> but as establishing a superior force to shut in the German fleet.

So successful were the results accomplished by the British Grand Fleet at the word of command, that, in the general satisfaction, other areas were almost forgotten. In these other areas the events were not all so fortunate. It is true that the German merchant ships disappeared from the seas. All were shut up

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Tirpitz's bitter complaint is proof enough that there was no such plan: "At the outbreak of war I was surprised to learn that the navy's plan of operations, which had been withheld from me, had not been arranged in advance with the army." "My Memoirs."

in German ports, or sought refuge in neutral harbors. In a very short time these carriers of commerce were lost to Germany, so far-reaching was the control of the seas by the British fleet, but another class of German ships was not so quickly disposed of. There were a few outlying light German cruisers left on the seas to prey on British commerce. These craft (*Emden*, *Königsberg*, etc.) did a great deal of damage to British shipping before they were run down and destroyed. The *Emden* was another *Alabama* in the successful audacity of her cruise.

It was unfortunate that the British fleet in the Pacific, off the coast of South America, should have been left without reinforcement to be destroyed by a concentration of German cruisers under Admiral Spee (Battle of Coronel, November 1, 1914).<sup>1</sup> The two British battle cruisers which were later sent out, to make up the force that destroyed Spee's fleet (Battle of Falkland Islands, December 8, 1914),<sup>2</sup> could have been spared from the British fleet at one time as well as at another. However, neither the exploits of the

<sup>1</sup> Early in the war a British squadron under Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock had proceeded around Cape Horn into the Pacific. This force consisted of *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* (armored cruisers, 24 knots); *Glasgow* (scout cruiser, 26 knots); *Canopus* (old coast defense battleship, 16.5 knots); *Otranto* (transport). Against this squadron a concentration of German warships was effected under Admiral Spee, off Coronel on the coast of Chili.

The German squadron consisted of *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* (armored cruisers, 23.5 knots); *Leipzig* (protected cruiser, 23 knots); *Nürnberg* and *Dresden* (scout cruisers, 24 knots). The three British cruisers, followed by the *Otranto*, were steaming with the *Canopus* 250 miles behind, when they met the German squadron on the afternoon of November 1, 1914. Admiral Cradock engaged the German squadron without the support of the battleship *Canopus*, under unfavorable conditions of sea and weather. In the action which followed, the German squadron was greatly superior in armament and in tactical position. The British squadron was overwhelmed. "The *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* were destroyed. The *Glasgow* had a narrow and lucky escape." "Naval Power in the War", Commander Charles C. Gill, U. S. N.

<sup>2</sup> After the defeat off Coronel, the British Admiralty acted with the greatest energy to regain control in South American waters. Two battle

German commerce destroyers nor the temporary triumph of Spee had any real effect upon the course of the war. Of more actual importance was the escape of the German battle cruiser *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, a light cruiser, which were in the Mediterranean Sea at the outbreak of the war. The French Navy had assumed the task of controlling the Mediterranean, where there was also a British squadron. Yet these ships managed to escape from Messina and make their way to Constantinople. The force of the two German warships was not a very great factor, but their presence in Constantinople undoubtedly strengthened the hand of the German party in Turkey and helped to bring Turkey into the war at an early date on the side of Germany.<sup>1</sup> (Turkey at war October 29, 1914.)

Even more serious in its consequences was the omission of the Allied Governments to declare a legal blockade against the Central Powers at the outset. In fact this was one of the greatest errors in policy of the war. Trusting to the established British control of the seas to check at will all shipping with the

cruisers under Vice Admiral Sturdee were dispatched to this region, and the British Navy in turn effected a surprise concentration against the German squadron of Admiral Spee.

In addition to the *Canopus* and *Glasgow*, the British fleet comprised: *Invincible* and *Inflexible* (battle cruisers, 26.5 knots); *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, and *Kent* (armored cruisers, 23 knots); *Bristol* (scout cruiser, 26.5 knots).

The German squadron of Admiral Spee was the same as at the Battle of Coronel, and in an over-confident attack on the Falkland Islands wireless and coaling station, off the southeast coast of South America, the greatly superior force of the British fleet was encountered in the morning of December 8, 1914.

All the German ships were destroyed except the *Dresden*, which managed to escape "and made a precarious, commerce-destroying cruise" until destroyed, March 14, 1915. "Naval Power in the War", Commander Charles C. Gill, U. S. N.

<sup>1</sup> "The whole Turkish situation received its definite favorable ending through the success of this break-through . . . and the arrival of our vessels made it possible to ensure that she came in on our side rather than against us." Tirpitz, "My Memoirs."



enemy's goods, the declaration of a legal blockade was not thought necessary.

The perfected case of a successful legal blockade established by the United States in the Civil War was a precedent at hand ready for the Allies to follow. This blockade of the coasts of the Confederate States had been a deciding factor in the Civil War. It was the first blockade after the definition of a blockade by the Declaration of Paris, 1856 ("A blockade to be legal must be effective"), and it had been so carefully built up that there was not any question of its legality. Not only did it cover goods for an enemy port but all goods whose ultimate destination was the enemy's country.<sup>1</sup> If a similar blockade had been declared by the Allies at the beginning of the war, it would not have caused undue friction among the neutral nations, as this proper legal precedent existed. Instead of this, Great Britain in an Admiralty order announced military areas in the North Sea (November 1, 1914). Of course this was done because of confidence in the British control of the sea, and before the possibilities of the submarines were appreciated. The harm was twofold. It gave Germany the pretext to proclaim war zones in her later illegal submarine warfare, and it made the blockade more irritating, after the Allies had discovered the mistake and had begun to enforce a blockade similar to the blockade in the Civil War.

Naturally in the first months of the war these difficulties had not developed, but the British Navy soon found its task complicated by the peculiar conditions at the enemy's bases. The German Navy, although confined to its bases, was not in the usual predicament of an inferior navy shut up in its ports, on account of the double base of the Kiel Canal and outpost of the island of Heligoland. It was an irony

<sup>1</sup> Appendix. American Tactics in The World War.

of fate that Great Britain should have allowed Prussia to take Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark in the sixties, which made the Kiel Canal possible, and afterwards in the late eighties that Great Britain should actually cede Heligoland to Germany. The harm done by that unfortunate gift of Heligoland to Germany cannot be measured.

Heligoland had been made a fortress, impregnable to attack from the sea, and it guarded the naval bases and the North Sea entrance of the Kiel Canal. The island lies 35 miles northwest of Cuxhaven and 43 miles north of Wilhelmshaven. The protection of this island allowed the Germans to maintain the extensive mine fields, which served as outworks to hold off the British fleet at a distance, and also gave a wide scope to the activities of submarines, mine layers, and raiders.

Early in August it was reported that German mine layers were at work. On August 6 the German steamer *Koenigen Luise* was sunk while engaged in mine laying. The next day the British light cruiser *Amphion* was sunk by one of these mines. Soon after submarines began to attack the ships of the fleet. Three British cruisers, *Cressy*, *Aboukir*, and *Hogue*, were sunk in one day by submarine attacks.<sup>1</sup> Admiral Jellicoe in his book states that a submarine was sighted in Scapa Flow, the great base of the fleet, on September 1: In October the *Audacious*, a modern dreadnought, was sunk by a mine when out for target practice.

All these constant dangers greatly increased the task of the British fleet.<sup>2</sup> Bases had to be devised which were screened from torpedo attacks; mine sweeping had to be constantly carried on; fixed patrols could not be maintained; and the greatest precautions were necessary in all movements of the fleet. These were

<sup>1</sup> September 22, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix. Review of the Battle of Jutland.

the actual conditions at the time there was so much talk of "digging out" the German ships. As long as Heligoland protected the vast areas of mine fields and lurking places for submarines, this was an impossible task. Lord Jellicoe in his book states that the project of an attempt to reduce Heligoland by an attack of the British fleet was discussed in the fall of 1914, and the scheme was very properly rejected. All the experience of the war has shown the weakness of guns on the sea against guns on shore, and this naval attack on Heligoland would have been a disastrous failure. With the island batteries in existence and the great mine fields interposing, there was no possibility of attacking the German ships at their bases.

Yet, in spite of all these unexpected difficulties, which made the task of the British Navy so much harder, the British fleet was able to maintain a control of the seas that prevented any move of the German Navy to change the situation.

The necessary means of safe communication by water between England and France was established from the first by the British Navy. This was most essential. The constant stream of men and supplies that were to be transported to France, with the need for much return transportation, made it all-important that the Channel water-way should be free from interference by the enemy. The problem was simplified by the condition that the shore terminals on each side remained practically free from attack. The task was to guard the water-way from raids, mines, and submarines. The Channel was defended from these dangers by the use of nets, mine fields and, later in the war, by barrages of mines. To maintain these defenses, even in this narrow stretch of water, involved constant effort on the part of the Dover Patrol<sup>1</sup> which was in charge of the whole Channel area.

<sup>1</sup> "The Dover Patrol, 1915-1917." Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, R. N.

All kinds of craft were used in the Patrol, which successfully safeguarded the Channel throughout the war. Occasionally German submarines penetrated the defenses and worked their way into the Channel, and there were raids at times. But it may be said at once that the communication by water between France and Great Britain was maintained practically without interruption from the enemy, and the great volume of men and supplies that passed over it met only nominal losses.

The Central Powers controlled the Dardanelles, and, on account of the double German naval base, the Entente Allies could never control the Baltic. In all other areas the Allies dominated the waterways of the world. German shipping and German commerce had disappeared, and, except by the use of the furtive submarine, the Central Powers were barred from the seas.

The strategic situation which had been brought about thus early in the war by Sea Power should be summed up at this time. The Entente Allies, from conditions firmly established before the beginning of the war, possessed so great a superiority in sea power that it was not overturned, nor seriously endangered, until the destructive campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917. The aims of the Allies in the strategic use of Sea Power, were to control the seas for their own purposes, and to prevent the Central Powers from using them. This meant that the Allies aimed to make the water-ways of the world secure means of transporting men and supplies, to maintain their armies, their peoples, and their industries; and they also aimed to shut off the Central Powers from the use of these invaluable means of carrying on the war.

On the other hand, the strategic objectives of the Central Powers in naval warfare were necessarily limited by this established superiority of their enemies.



Consequently the Teutonic naval strategy may be defined as a constant effort to threaten and impair the existing Allied control of the seas. As has been described, the German fleet was greatly helped by the unusual conditions at its bases, and was not merely a passive force that had been put out of action. Beside keeping the Allies from control of the Baltic, and also holding blockading forces at a distance, the German Navy was enabled to be an active menace, which made necessary a continued use of Allied resources to contain the German fleet. This situation was a constant tax enforced upon the Allies throughout the war. The control of the Dardanelles by the Central Powers was also a serious check upon the Allies. In combination with the German control of the Baltic, it kept Russia cut off from military supplies to such an extent that it became a great factor in causing the military collapse of Russia.

In other respects, at the end of 1914 as explained, the Allies in the main had accomplished the aims of their naval strategy. The submarine was giving them trouble, but it had not then become a serious factor in the situation. The Allies had the benefit of the water-ways of the world, and troops and supplies could be transported by them at will. On the other hand, the Germans had been shut off from the water-ways, and the blockade of Germany had been begun. From this time Germany and her allies were destined to feel increasing hardships inflicted upon them by Sea Power in the hands of their enemies.

### MAP NO. 3. THE INFLUENCE OF SEA POWER

(This map is diagrammatic only)

- ① Main base of British Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow.
- ② Double base of the German High Seas Fleet, formed by the Kiel Canal, giving entrance into both the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.
- ③ The outwork of the island of Heligoland.
- ④ Communication by sea with France, established from the first, and maintained without interruption by the Dover Patrol.
- ⑤ Strip of Belgian coast held by the Germans for four years (October, 1914–October, 1918).
- ⑥ Dardanelles Straits, controlled by the Central Powers throughout the war, shutting off communication with Russia through the Black Sea ports.
- ⑦ Baltic Sea, controlled by the Germans throughout the war, giving them minerals and supplies from Sweden and shutting off communication with the Russians through this Sea.
- ⑧ The uncompleted railway system from Petrograd to the Murman coast.
- ⑨ Archangel and the White Sea, showing the only communication (frozen a great part of the year) with Russia, except by the Siberian Railroad.

ONLY WATER-WAY COMMUNICATION WITH RUSSIA,  
FROZEN PART OF THE YEAR.

ALL OTHER WATER-WAYS CONTROLLED BY THE  
ENTENTE ALLIES AND CLOSED TO THE CENTRAL  
POWERS EXCEPT BY THE USE OF U-BOATS.



## CHAPTER VI

### MILITARY EVENTS IN THE WEST<sup>1</sup>

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER, 1914

THE retreat of the German armies, beginning September 10 after their defeat at the Battle of the Marne, was successfully accomplished, and the German intrenched positions, laid out in advance, in case of such a forced retirement, were very strong. On the German right Kluck was intrenched behind the Aisne, and the other German armies were aligned upon this position, extending to the region just north of Verdun. The pursuit of the Allied armies had been very vigorous, but it was completely checked by September 13. For several days General Joffre attacked (Battle of the Aisne), still hoping to dislodge the German armies and drive them out of France, but in their new line the Germans were too strong, and they not only beat off the Allied attacks, but they improved their own positions. It was at this time that the Germans captured St. Mihiel<sup>2</sup> and established their positions on the salient at that point extending into the Allied line east of Verdun.

This St. Mihiel salient was always very troublesome, and the Germans were able to hold it securely for four years, until it was won back by the Americans in the last campaign of the war. In fact, the line of defenses then established by the Germans east of the

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 4 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> September 23, 1914.



Oise, stretching along the Aisne, north of Rheims, Verdun, and Nancy, to Alsace, remained as the basis for the fighting in those regions for most of that period.

By September 20, General Joffre had become convinced that he could not dislodge the Germans by frontal attacks, and he began to manoeuvre to turn the German right flank by extending his own left across the Oise to the north. Troops were brought over from the inactive French right, and they were first moved against St. Quentin and the railroads in that region. This was the beginning of what was called the "Race to the Sea",<sup>1</sup> but the first flanking manoeuvres were not undertaken with the object of stretching the line to the North Sea. The French Command had high hopes of dislodging the Germans, and at the time confident predictions were made day by day that the Germans would be in retreat.

But all these hopes<sup>2</sup> were disappointed. As the French general moved troops over to his left across the Oise, the Germans countered by also moving troops to face them.<sup>3</sup> The French line was extended gradually north towards Lille, the Germans making corresponding moves. This enforced extension of the German lines removed any danger of renewed massed German attacks east of the Oise, as the necessary troops were largely drawn from these regions, and to this extent the new situation so developed was to the advantage of the Entente Allies. There was really no chance of driving the German armies out of France, and to compel the Germans to maintain long lines was a distinct gain. Yet pushing the Allied left flank so far north exposed this flank to a new danger, which

<sup>1</sup> "La Course à la Mer."

<sup>2</sup> "... We were still hopeful of effecting a great flanking movement." Lord French, "1914."

<sup>3</sup> "It only remained, therefore, to carry out with greatest speed movements behind the German front corresponding to the enemy's movements. . . ." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

came near being disastrous to General Joffre's armies before their left flank was safely established on the North Sea.

This movement to the north by the left flank of General Joffre's armies, without seeking the protection of the sea to make the left of the line secure, is explained by the hope entertained by the French Command that the Belgian army would be able to maintain itself in Antwerp, and that, by extending the Allied line north to join the Belgian army, the Germans might be kept east of the River Scheldt, where they would be exposed to flanking attacks against their communications as the Allied armies grew stronger. This plan was set at naught by the easy capture of Antwerp by the Germans.

After the withdrawal of the Belgian army into Antwerp, only enough German forces were kept about the city to contain the Belgian army. At that time the Germans were too occupied by the campaign against France to take any measures to reduce the city, but, with Joffre's armies moving toward the Scheldt, it became necessary for the German Staff to decide on the capture of the place.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly siege artillery was brought to the region of Antwerp. Even with all the natural protections of the surroundings of the city, in addition to the fortifications, the reduction of the great fortress of Antwerp proved to be merely another easy task for the new howitzer artillery. The bombardment opened September 29, and on October 8 the fortress was no longer tenable, the Belgian army evacuating the city on that day. Antwerp was formally surrendered to the Germans on the next day (October 9, 1914).

In fact the Belgian army had delayed its retreat

<sup>1</sup> "At the same time the threat to the rear from Antwerp had to be removed at all cost." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.



too long, perhaps encouraged by the arrival of British marines. In consequence the Belgian retreat was hurried and the Belgian troops were hard pressed. One division was forced into Holland, where it was interned. That the rest of the Belgian army was allowed to escape was another evidence of the failure of the German Great General Staff at this time to follow any lines outside of the preconceived plan of war.

The pursuing Germans drove down the Belgian coast beyond Ostend, which was occupied with slight resistance. At the mouth of the River Yser the advance of the Germans was halted. The Belgians were reinforced by Allied troops, and the natural defenses of this region of dikes and canals formed a barrier the Germans could not overcome. The country was flooded, and the left of the Allied line was established on the North Sea at the mouth of the Yser, where it was maintained for four years.

In the meantime the left wing of General Joffre's armies, consisting of French troops and the reinforced British army of General French, had attempted to continue the flanking movement in the regions between Lille and Ghent. On October 6 General French reported to Lord Kitchener that the French troops on the Allied left were near La Bassée, and that the object of the Allies was "to bring about a retirement of the Germans from their present positions by turning their northern flank." The British army was then moved over to its new northern position on the extreme left. In the days following the fall of Antwerp the Allied left was advancing in Flanders. This advance was met by the unexpectedly strong attacks of the German armies, which were moving south after taking Antwerp. The Allied left was in a hazardous situation, and the flanking offensive was beaten back with heavy losses, the British army again having been assaulted by superior forces.

These gains against the British and French aroused the German Command to make a belated attempt at breaking through the Allied left and winning the Channel coast, with Calais. Great efforts were made to accomplish this. Attempts at the mouth of the Yser and near Dixmude were defeated with the help of the flooded country as described (Battle of the Yser). Farther inland in Flanders these attempts were long continued, with desperate fighting which lasted until the middle of November. These constant battles were most severe in the region of the town of Ypres, which made a salient in the line held by the British. Some of the most desperate fighting of the war took place on this sector, but the Germans were not strong enough to force their way through, and this part of the line of battle also became fixed for a long time.

This first of the many bloody battles in Flanders (First Battle of Ypres) was characterized by the hopeless confused slaughter that afterwards became the feature of battles in this region. It was a country where it was almost impossible to use troops in battle; usually a sea of mud in which men and guns wallowed about with no chance of getting anywhere or winning any decision. The fall rains ended all possibility of a German victory, and the fighting waned away in utter exhaustion. This was practically the end of the campaign in the West in 1914,<sup>1</sup> although there was constant fighting along the long line which had been established

<sup>1</sup> October 3-19, 1914. Transfer of British army to Flanders.

October 20. Allied line complete to coast of North Sea.

October 21. First Battle of Ypres begins.

October 27-28. British line forced back. Fighting at Neuve Chapelle and Festubert.

October 31. Critical situation in First Battle of Ypres.

November 1. French troops arrive at Ypres.

November 2. British line pierced near Neuve Chapelle.

November 5. British line reestablished.

November 11. Attack of Prussian Guard.

November 17. End of First Battle of Ypres.

of two intrenched armies facing one another from the North Sea to the Alps.

The military situation was like that at Petersburg in the Civil War, where Lee's and Grant's armies had settled in a deadlock intrenched against one another. So evident was the strength of these intrenchments that each side realized it must wait for greater forces to win against the other. Verdun and the other fortresses had become positions in the lines of intrenchments, which had become recognized as the only protection for armies in position under the new conditions of warfare. So complete had been the revolution in weapons and tactics brought about by a few weeks of the great war.<sup>1</sup>

The captured strip of Belgian coast was fortified, and garrisoned by the Marine Corps, made up from the garrisons of the German naval fortresses. These were not in danger, as they were protected by the great outwork of Heligoland and the mine fields.<sup>2</sup> This Flanders coast was destined to provide bases for submarines, and its possession by Germany was a setback for the Allies.

<sup>1</sup> "Trench warfare, such as we have seen it, which caused all land advance to fail for three years, has been a revelation." Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, R. N., "The Dover Patrol."

<sup>2</sup> "Owing to the caution of the hostile fleet our naval fortresses did not appear to be threatened and we were able to withdraw their garrisons."

"They went to form the Marine Corps, which was employed on the Flanders coast after the taking of Antwerp." Tirpitz, "My Memoirs."

#### MAP No. 4. OPERATIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONT (September–December, 1914)

##### "LA COURSE À LA MER"

(This map is diagrammatic only)

① First extension of the Allied left flank across the Oise toward the region of St. Quentin (September), and ② the German move to neutralize it.

② Allied movement toward Lille, also countered ③ by the Germans.

③ Flanking advance toward Ghent (October), which encountered the Germans advancing in force ④ from Antwerp, bringing on the First Battle of Ypres (October–November, 1914).

D. German drive along the Belgian coast beyond Ostend, checked at the Yser (Battle of the Yser, October, 1914).

— Battle line of the winter of 1914–1915.







## CHAPTER VII

### MILITARY EVENTS IN THE EAST<sup>1</sup>

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER, 1914

THE military situation in the East did not improve for the Teutonic allies after the middle of September. Following the defeat of the Austrians at Lemberg and the retreat of the beaten army of Auffenberg across the Carpathians, with the consequent retreat of Dankl's Austrian army across the San River, the Russian armies continued to overrun Galicia. Small bodies of Russian troops crossed the Carpathians into the plain of Hungary, but the main Russian offensive was aimed against Cracow to complete the conquest of Galicia.

By October 1 the Russians had crossed the San. Przemyśl, the great Austrian fortress in Galicia, was besieged, and the Russian armies were advancing against Cracow. The fortress of Przemyśl was a strong ring fortification, and, as the Russians were lacking in siege artillery, they were obliged to envelop it with an army and resort to the old methods of siege and blockade. This was a great contrast to the methods employed in this war by the Germans against such ring fortifications. The use of the new modern artillery would have made the capture of Przemyśl a matter of a few days only. The Russians were obliged to take months, and to use great numbers of troops, to reduce the fortress. Nothing could illustrate

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 5 at the end of this chapter.

more forcibly the weakness of the Russian armies in artillery and munitions, which was the greatest handicap for them in waging the war.

Through their defeats in Serbia and at Lemberg the Austrians had lost nearly half their effectives, and it was necessary that something should be done by the Germans to relieve the situation. German troops in any great numbers could not be spared from the West, and the only resort was to use the forces of Hindenburg, which had remained on the East Prussian border after destroying Samsonoff's army at Tannenberg and driving back Rennenkampf's army from East Prussia.

Hindenburg did not have many troops for this purpose, but he made a very skilful use of all his available forces, using the military railroads, which always gave the Central Powers so great an advantage in disposing their armies for attack. The German Command moved these troops in the direction of Cracow, but, instead of merely using them to defend that place, he directed them in a drive to the northeast against Warsaw, and at the same time another column was sent in conjunction with the Austrians against Ivangorod. Hindenburg's intention was to capture Warsaw, if possible, by a rapid surprise movement; but, even if he failed in this, the German general believed the attack would create a diversion that would compel the Russians to draw back their forces in Galicia.

This drive against Warsaw was not formidable in numbers. In fact it was more a raid than a serious invasion. It relied for success less upon main strength than upon rapidity of movement, and upon the hope that the Russians would be able to gather only a feeble force to defend the Polish capital. It actually came very near taking the city. The Germans had advanced with great rapidity, and on October 14 they were on the outskirts of Warsaw. The city was saved

by a part of the concentration of the Russian armies that was steadily progressing. A number of Siberian army corps were on the way to the European front, and it was possible to make use of these troops just in time to defend Warsaw.

There was fighting for a week near the city, and Hindenburg made the most of his threat against Warsaw; but the Russians were too strong, and without imperiling the German troops in a heavy battle Hindenburg began to withdraw both columns to the frontier on October 21.

Although Warsaw was not taken, this raid gained its objective to the extent of causing the Russians to withdraw from the advance on Cracow. The Russians had at once retreated across the San River. The siege of Przemyśl was raised for the time being, and the Russians also fell back from their advanced positions in the Carpathians. In this way Hindenburg had accomplished important results, but these results were only temporary. As soon as it was determined that the German armies had retreated from Poland, the Russians again advanced in Galicia, and the siege of Przemyśl was promptly renewed. Something else had to be done to relieve the Austrians, and Hindenburg, whose armies had been withdrawn west of Lodz, was again compelled to call upon German troops from the West for reinforcements to counteract the Russian menace in Galicia. It was evident that the military situation could not any longer be remedied by simply manoeuvring the scant forces at his command. From this time the Eastern front continued to divert German troops from the West, and this fact must be kept in mind, as it had a great influence upon the plans and operations of the whole war for the next two years.

In the meantime the Austrians had undertaken another invasion of Serbia to avenge the defeat of



the first Austrian punitive expedition in August, 1914. In September, 1914, the Austrians advanced into Serbia, but again they had not gathered a strong enough army to make a successful invasion, and they were again repulsed. In November the Austrian forces were greatly increased, and they renewed the invasion. This attack was more formidable, and the Serbs were driven back. The capital, Belgrade, was captured (December 2, 1914), and Serbia seemed at the point of being conquered. The Austrians, however, were too confident that the victory had been won, and troops were sent to reinforce the Austrian armies which were opposing the Russians in the southeast. Against the invading army, which had thus been weakened, the Serbians made an unexpected stand, and, taking the offensive in turn, they completely defeated the Austrian army. Belgrade was recaptured (December 14, 1914), and the second attempt of the Austrians to invade Serbia had ended in failure.

The reinforced armies of Hindenburg were moved against Lodz and began a heavy attack upon the Russians in November. By skilfully manoeuvring this army the German Command not only caused great losses to the Russians,<sup>1</sup> but very nearly inflicted another defeat like the Battle of Tannenberg, as the Germans had enveloped the Russian right wing. This threatened disaster was averted by reinforcements sent to the Russians on the northern flank from Warsaw. After days of heavy fighting, the Germans captured Lodz on December 6, and pushed the Russians back toward Warsaw. But again the Germans were not strong enough to drive to the city, and, as the season advanced, transportation became very difficult, and the condition of the country impeded the movements of the German artillery. With these conditions in their favor the Russians were able to check the

<sup>1</sup> Battle of Lodz.

MAP No. 5. EASTERN FRONT  
(September-December, 1914)  
(This map is diagrammatic only)

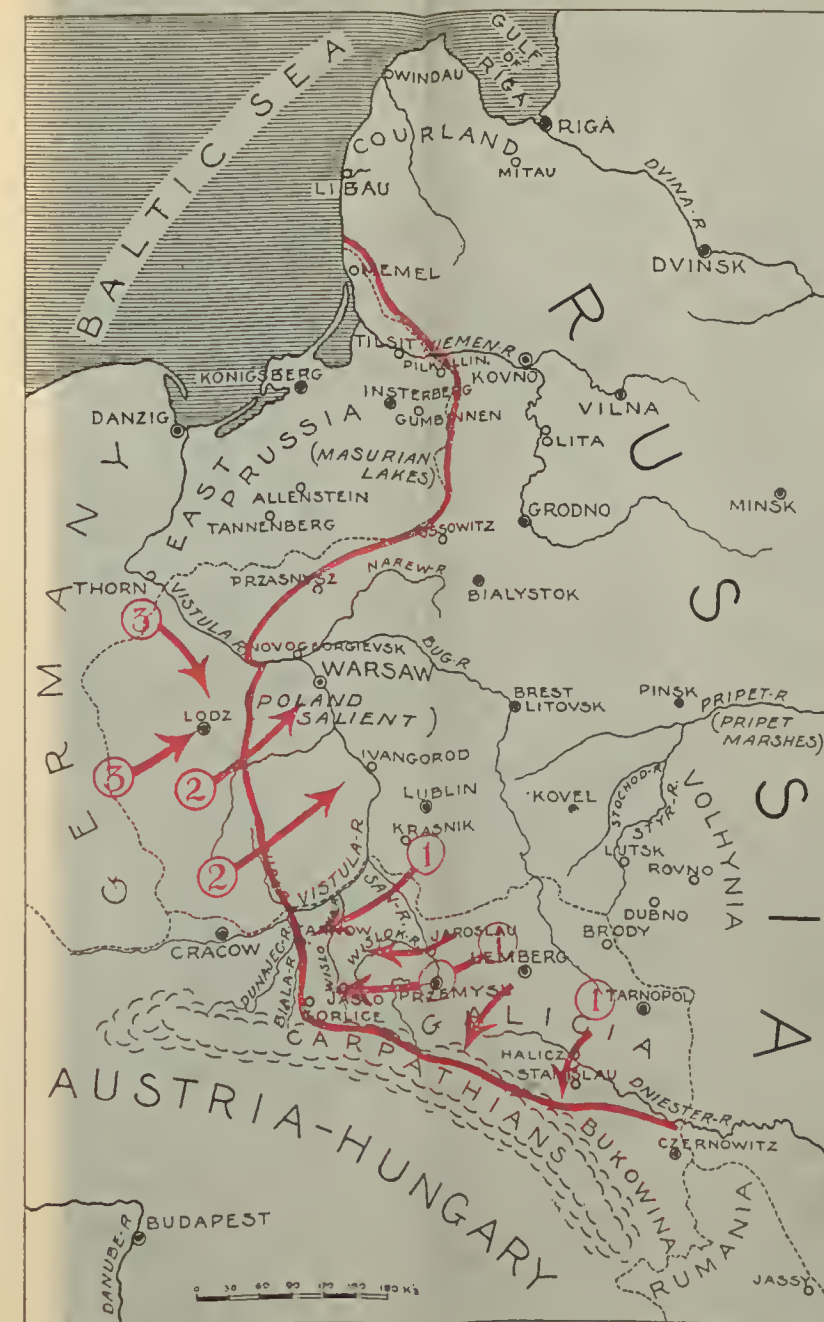
OPERATIONS IN POLAND AND GALICIA

① Russian gains after Battle of Lemberg, overrunning Galicia, besieging Przemyśl, advancing toward Cracow and into the Carpathians.

② Double raid toward Warsaw and Ivangorod (October, 1914), which caused the Russians to withdraw in Galicia, and for a time raised the siege of Przemyśl.

③ The second German attempt toward Warsaw (Battle of Lodz, December, 1914), which did not again raise the siege of Przemyśl or force the Russians to withdraw in Galicia.

— Battle line at the end of 1914. Przemyśl still closely besieged.





German advance so far west of Warsaw that the city was not threatened.

Desperate fighting continued, but the military situation gradually settled down to a condition similar to that on the Western front, with the two opposing forces intrenched against one another in a continuous line of battle.<sup>1</sup> This preservation of an unbroken front by the Russian armies prevented the German thrust against Warsaw after Lodz from again forcing the Russians to withdraw in the southeast, although much more actual damage was done than in the former raid. This time the Russian armies in Galicia were not compelled to retreat, as the Russian Command felt there were sufficient forces in the north to take care of the existing situation near Warsaw. Consequently the Russians were able to keep up their pressure toward Cracow, and Przemyśl was still closely besieged, in spite of Austrian attempts to relieve the place. At the same time the Russians continued to threaten an invasion of Hungary through the Carpathians.

This was the situation at the end of the year 1914, with the Germans and Russians facing one another along a battle line of some nine hundred miles, extending from the border of the lake region in East Prussia across Poland west of Warsaw, cutting the western end of Galicia in the region of Tarnow and Gorlice, southeast along the Carpathians, through Bukowina below Czernowitz, and to the Rumanian border, the longest line of battle by far in the world's history.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the year the Russians were also fighting with the Turks in the Caucasus Mountains.

<sup>1</sup> "Here commenced . . . a new period of the war — the war of position or trench warfare." General Gourko, "In Russia 1914-1917."

<sup>2</sup> "The question was who would be the first to shake this line from its torpor in the coming months." Hindenburg, "Out of My Life."

## CHAPTER VIII

### MILITARY SITUATION AT THE FIRST OF THE YEAR 1915<sup>1</sup>

#### PREPARATIONS OF THE ENTENTE ALLIES. PLAN FOR THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE AGAINST RUSSIA

THE first of the year 1915 found the military situation very much in favor of the Entente Allies. It was true that in 1914 Germany had overrun Belgium and a large part of the industrial districts of France, but the campaign from which so much had been expected had ended with the German armies held in a deadlock on an intrenched front, where it was impossible for them to renew the offensive. On the Russian front Germany was compelled to face growing Russian armies on the borders of East Prussia, which required an increase of the German forces in that region. In the southeast her ally Austria was so hard pressed that German aid was necessary to prevent a collapse of Austrian resistance. The Russians had overrun Galicia, and the situation especially in Hungary was grave.

A study of the map will show that the Central Powers were practically besieged. They were even cut off from their new ally, Turkey. The Ottoman Empire was the one nation that had been induced to cast its lot with Germany, and the Turks had given great aid by keeping Russia shut off from France and England

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 6 at the end of this chapter.

and from the supplies that might have passed through the Dardanelles. But between the Teutons and the Turks was the group of Balkan nations which formed a barrier. Serbia had maintained her existence, and Rumania and Bulgaria were still uncertain as to their course in the war.

With an unbroken battle line opposing Germany in the West and in the East, the German failure to win victory in 1914 had made the neutral nations bordering on the Teutonic allies reluctant to take the side of the Central Powers. On the other hand in Italy the popular demand was increasing for the nation to enter the war on the side of the Allies, and, in spite of the well-organized efforts of the German interests in the kingdom, it was evident that the time would come when this demand would control Italy. Consequently Germany could not look for help on her borders. She was surrounded by a ring through which there was no passage.

At the first of the year 1915, as explained, Germany was also shut off from use of the seas. The German merchant marine was either lying in home ports or had taken refuge with neutrals. Consequently the German colonies were isolated and had been occupied by the Entente Allies, or, as in the case of Africa, were doomed to fall into the hands of the enemy.<sup>1</sup> Japan had joined the Entente Allies (Japan declared war August 23, 1914), and the Japanese had captured the much prized German possessions in China. (Kiaochau surrendered November 7, 1914.) With all these factors against her, it is not strange that the defeat of Germany was considered already accomplished.

Each of the three great nations of the Entente Allies had intrusted the preparations for the coming offensive campaigns of 1915 to a military dictator, — for such

<sup>1</sup> "The last of the German colonies — German East Africa — has been cleared of the enemy." War Cabinet Report, Year 1917.



had General Joffre become in France after his victory of the Marne. Lord Kitchener had been given absolute control in Great Britain. The Grand Duke Nicholas was paramount in Russia. Each of these men was a typical soldier of his nation, and each had gained the confidence of his people by his conduct of the war in 1914. Herein lay the failure of the Entente Allies, for each of these leaders believed that the height of military efficiency had been reached in the recent campaigns of 1914, and each believed that the ensuing campaigns would be carried out on the same lines. None of them realized that greater tasks and entirely different conditions were to be encountered in 1915.<sup>1</sup>

One reason for this confidence on the part of the British and French commands was the great development of barrage fire and the excellence of the French "75s", which undoubtedly were the best field guns used in the 1914 campaign, and which maintained a high value throughout the war. Barrage fire of these guns had become very effective in the latter part of 1914, and great results were expected in 1915 from the use of a barrier fire of large numbers of the "75s" lifted and advanced, with the infantry advancing behind it. The French Command had confidence in this preparation of artillery,<sup>2</sup> and it is well known that Lord Kitchener was also satisfied with the existing equipment of artillery. The faith in this type of gun was the reason for the belief in the "established superiority in artillery" of the Allies, so often cited at the time, which lulled the peoples of the Entente Allies into false security.

<sup>1</sup> "With these inadequate means, we certainly did stem the invasion in the first year, but so long as the shortage in our effectives and material was not made good, we were not in a position to undertake the long sustained offensive which alone would force a decision by arms." Foch.

<sup>2</sup> "The latest manufactured ammunition for the '75s' gun had shown wonderful results." General Joffre in conference with General French. "1914", Lord French.

Although the lack of artillery and munitions had been the outstanding weakness of the Russian armies, their achievements had been so great that the Russian Command also had every confidence in the future. In the councils of the Allies, at times during the drives at Warsaw and the fighting about Lodz, there had been fears of Russian defeat. But at the end of the year 1914 Russia was thought by the British and French leaders to be victorious everywhere.<sup>1</sup> Galicia was overrun, the fall of besieged Przemysl was only a matter of weeks, and the Grand Duke Nicholas' armies were supposed to be breaking through the Carpathians into Hungary.

Consequently all the Allied commands were united in high hopes for the campaigns of 1915. On the Western front the desire of the British to control the Channel coast became a strong influence upon their strategy in the war, but General French's idea of an offensive on the north of the line along the coast in Flanders had been overruled. General Joffre had made his plan for attacks upon the Germans in the regions of Arras and Rheims, and it is known that he was confident that he would break the German line.<sup>2</sup>

It is evident that the commands of the Allied armies believed they would be able to defeat the German military power by the use of the means at their disposal. Their preparations were considered adequate at the time, and there seemed to be no suspicion of the colossal preparations the Germans were making at the same time, which were destined to change the year 1915 into a tragedy for the Entente Allies.

In the councils of their enemies there was a very

<sup>1</sup> "The last entry in my diary — December 31, 1914 — is as follows: 'Our night conference showed more and increasing important Russian successes.'" "1914", Lord French.

<sup>2</sup> "I met Joffre . . . as arranged . . . Joffre's plan was as follows: He meant to break through the enemy's line from the south at Rheims and from the west at Arras." "1914", Lord French.



different situation. Although the supposedly infallible plans of the German Great General Staff had failed to win a decisive victory in 1914, it must be realized that the German people was still united in its belief in the German military machine, and throughout the nation there was no question of ultimate victory. The German armies were in France, and the victory of Tannenberg was an offset against the disappointment of the Marne. There was no thought of the Germans slackening in their efforts. The whole nation was united in the war, and still desired to devote all its energies to preparations for victory. With this enthusiasm at their command, the German military leaders could call upon the nation for a great effort in the coming year.

It is true that confidence in the General Staff had waned, but Hindenburg had become the idol of the German people, and the popular demand, in addition to his victories, had given him supreme command in the East.<sup>1</sup> Hindenburg was now a power in the nation, and he could urge the necessity for action in the East against the obsession of the Great General Staff for a decision in the West. In addition to the purely military aspect of the question there was a grave political situation in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, especially in Hungary. The Austro-Hungarian Government felt that there would be popular discontent with the war unless Germany gave help to the Austrian armies.

Influenced by these considerations it was decided that preparations would be made, for the campaigns of 1915, merely to hold the German positions on the Western front, but to conduct a great offensive against the Russians in the East.<sup>2</sup> Plans were accordingly

<sup>1</sup> Commander-in-Chief in the East, November 1, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> "The German General Staff now resolved to try to obtain a decision against Russia." Ludendorff.

made and supplies provided for this scheme. The positions on the Western front were strengthened and adequately supplied with artillery;<sup>1</sup> but the preparations for the campaign in the East were on a scale never before attempted. Especially in artillery were provisions made on a vast scale. Unlike the Entente Allies, the Germans had not remained satisfied with the weapons and tactics of 1914. They planned to use new tactics against the Russians, and the basis of these tactics was to be a new and destructive use of artillery, an advance over the methods of barrage fire developed by the French. Heavy guns were to be used in the field as well as fieldpieces. This was the natural result of the success of the Teutonic howitzer siege artillery, and large numbers of heavy guns of the howitzer type were built with field carriages, with the intention of using great masses of mobile artillery against armies in position. These new methods were especially dangerous to the Russians with their weakness in artillery.<sup>2</sup>

With this destructive weapon at their command, it was planned to consolidate the German and Austro-Hungarian armies in the East, with strong German reinforcements, the whole to be under the command of the German General Staff.

General Hindenburg was remarkable from the fact that, although an old man and formerly supposed to be tied to his East Prussian lakes, he had been able to adapt himself to new forces and changed conditions. In fact he had made himself the master of the new forces in warfare, and he evolved new tactics

<sup>1</sup> "... the decision to act purely on the defensive in France, with the most careful application of every imaginable technical device." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

<sup>2</sup> "Certainly the greatest and saddest influence on the progress of military events was the shortage of artillery . . . the Germans were using a 12-inch gun in field battles, whilst we had nothing heavier than a 6-inch gun till the spring of 1916." General Gourko, "In Russia 1914-1917."

from the new conditions. He had proved his theories right as to his favorite lakes and had made full use of them in actual warfare, but he was also able to leave the lakes behind him and to win results on other fields.

The school of Hindenburg had become the successful rival of the German Great General Staff of 1914, and to show how much nearer the strategy of Hindenburg was to the strategy of the Moltke of 1870, it is only necessary to quote from an interview given out by Hindenburg: "One does a great injustice to an army commander by attributing to him a program. He constantly has in his head a plan of war, a general view of war, but there is no prepared program, except that one — to gain victory. Where and how that shall be done can only be decided each moment anew, on the basis of events. Therefore a decision can be looked for as well in the East as in the West."

At the beginning of 1915 there were already associated with Hindenburg the two men who had much to do with his great successes in the war, Ludendorff and Mackensen. Both had become parts of the formidable machine which made the Hindenburg strategy a menace to the Allies throughout the war.

Ludendorff, his Chief of Staff, was Hindenburg's *alter ego*. The master mind of Ludendorff was an essential factor in all Hindenburg's campaigns, and he eventually superseded the older general in control of the German armies. It must be kept in mind that the command of Hindenburg always meant this combination of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Mackensen was of another stamp, the executive who ably carried out the plans of this united control; and Mackensen well earned recognition as one of the great commanders of armies in the field.

With these forces being prepared for use against the Russians in 1915, it now seems strange to remember the optimism among the Entente Allies at the beginning

## MAP NO. 6. THE SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF 1915

### THE SIEGE OF THE CENTRAL POWERS

(This map is diagrammatic only)

A study of the map will show that the Central Powers were practically besieged, as they were even cut off from their ally Turkey. Italy and the Balkan states had remained neutral in 1914, leaving the situation very favorable for the Entente Allies. Shaded area controlled by Central Powers.

— Battle fronts.      ••••• neutral frontiers.

The Allies planned three offensives:

① The attack on the Dardanelles:

② The offensive on the Western Front:

③ The Russian offensive in Galicia, with an attempt to invade Hungary.

For none of these Allied offensives were preparations made sufficient to gain success.

The Central Powers planned merely to hold their line safely in the West, but to concentrate their strength against Russia.

ⒶⒶ The projected great Austro-German offensive in Galicia, with coöperating German attack in the north.







of that year, but all were confident that the Allied armies would be ready to take the offensive early in 1915 and win a decisive victory. The great resources of the German nation for war had not been measured at the close of 1914, and the feeble preparations of the Entente Allies, in contrast to the great efforts of the Germans, were destined to lose the advantages possessed by the Entente Allies at the beginning of 1915.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his book, "Out of My Life", Hindenburg discusses the decision for making the German offensive in the East in 1915.

"West or East? That was the great question, and on the answer to it our fate depended. . . . Even to me the decisive battle in the West, a battle which would have meant final victory, was the *ultima ratio*, but an *ultima ratio* which could only be reached over the body of a Russian stricken to the ground."

"At the bottom it was these views which were the subject of controversy between Main Headquarters, as then constituted, and my Army Headquarters."

The views of Hindenburg prevailed. Falkenhayn, the Chief of the General Staff at the beginning of 1915, states that this conclusion was reached "with a heavy heart," and that the "decision meant the further abandonment of any active campaign on a large scale in the West for a long time." The German General Staff, however, did not use Hindenburg's scheme of flanking attacks, but planned the assault in Galicia.

## CHAPTER IX

## OFFENSIVES OF ENTENTE ALLIES, 1915

## THE DARDANELLES

THE first offensive of the Entente Allies in 1915 was Great Britain's ill-starred attempt on the Dardanelles, which was originally undertaken with the fleet alone. The failure of this wrongly conceived project was so disastrous that the great stake at issue has been almost forgotten. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that at the beginning of 1915, in view of the military situation explained in the preceding chapter, the possession of the Dardanelles would have been the richest prize in the world for the Entente Allies.

In fact, if the Allies had captured Constantinople at the beginning of 1915, it would have been so great a physical and moral victory that it is hard to see how the Central Powers could have held out against its effects.<sup>1</sup> Possession of the Dardanelles by the Allies would have meant that the barrier separating Russia from France and England had been destroyed, and that the most harmful factor in the military situation had been eliminated. With the Dardanelles opened, munitions could have been sent to Russia, and the Russian food products could have been shipped to France and England. This is stating the benefit in the baldest terms. In addition there would have been the moral effect throughout the East, the influence

<sup>1</sup> "Should the Dardanelles fall, then the world-war has been decided against us." Tirpitz (letter of August 8, 1914). "My Memoirs."

on the hesitating nations, Greece, Bulgaria, and Rumania, and, with all this, perhaps most important of all, the ability to assist the Russians in the crisis which was impending over Russia, — the fatal German offensive of 1915.

All these great objects to be gained justified great risks, but on the other hand this all-important campaign demanded that plans should be made that would use every possible means to insure success. In this respect it cannot be said the efforts were equal to the occasion. The official reports of the inquiry as to the conduct of the Dardanelles operations are now available, and the preparations never were on a basis to promise a victory.

In addition to the obvious advantages to be gained, the Russian Government had requested that an attempt be made upon the Dardanelles. This led to a serious consideration of the project by the British War Council. At first the opinion was that a joint naval and military operation was necessary. Then a strong feeling appeared in favor of an attempt to force the Dardanelles by the fleet alone; and this idea gained serious consideration. The natural comment is that, even if the British fleet had been able to penetrate to Constantinople, it is hard to see how it could have maintained itself there without a military force, — and, if a military force were needed for this purpose, why not have it ready to coöperate in the attack?

The sentiment in favor of an attempt with the fleet was so strong that on January 3, 1915, the British Admiralty telegraphed to Vice Admiral Carden, commanding the British forces in the Mediterranean: "Do you think it is a practical operation to force the Dardanelles by the use of ships alone?" also informing him that older battleships would be used, with mine sweepers, etc., and that "the importance of the result would justify severe loss."



On the fifth Vice Admiral Carden telegraphed his opinion that the Dardanelles could not be rushed, but that "they might be forced by extended operations with a large number of ships." The First Lord of the Admiralty replied: "High authorities here concur in your opinion," and asked for Admiral Carden's estimate of the force necessary and his ideas as to the best way of employing it. The commander of the Mediterranean forces then submitted a scheme for operations, estimating that they would take a month. At a meeting of the British War Council January 13, 1915, it was voted "That the Admiralty should prepare for a naval expedition in February to bombard and take the Gallipoli peninsula with Constantinople as its objective."

Accordingly, a powerful fleet was gathered in the Mediterranean for this project, including the new super-dreadnought *Queen Elizabeth*, the battle cruiser *Inflexible*, a large number of the best British pre-dreadnought battleships, and also French pre-dreadnoughts, with many cruisers and auxiliaries of all kinds. The report of the inquiry shows that great confidence was felt in the ability of the powerful 15-inch guns of the *Queen Elizabeth*, and the other heavy guns of the fleet, to reduce the defenses of the Dardanelles, as the fortresses in Belgium had been reduced by the heavy Teutonic artillery, with the mistaken idea that ship's guns would be able to duplicate the havoc wrought by the guns on land.<sup>1</sup>

Lennos, Mudros, and Tenedos, islands in the Aegean Sea, were taken to use as bases for the fleet.

The first bombardment of the batteries at the entrance of the Straits was on February 19, and ap-

<sup>1</sup> "The authorities responsible for the mistaken idea were impressed by the success with which the German guns had reduced the Belgian forts, and concluded that in the same way ships' guns could reduce the Dardanelles forts." Sir Percy Scott, "Fifty Years in the Royal Navy."

parently it was successful in silencing the forts. But a renewed attack on February 25 led to the discovery that the damage inflicted in the former attack had not been permanent. In this attack on the twenty-fifth the forts were also silenced, and on the twenty-sixth, after the way had been cleared by mine sweepers, a division of battleships steamed four miles into the Straits, bombarding the inside defenses. There was another interval of bad weather, and, when the operations were renewed on March 1, it was again necessary to silence the forts. This time the mine sweepers and battleships penetrated still farther into the Straits, and for four days the bombardment of the shore batteries continued, and batteries were demolished by landing parties. On March 6 and 7 the fleet made violent attacks inside the Straits, while the *Queen Elizabeth's* 15-inch guns, assisted by the 12-inch guns of two other battleships, bombarded the forts from the Gulf of Saros.

The British Command believed that a great amount of damage had been done in these last attacks, but there was a delay in renewing the assault until March 18, as it had at last become evident that a military force was necessary to coöperate with the fleet to make landings. An Allied army of over 100,000 had been gathered at the near-by bases, and it was planned to make a concerted attack with the fleet and the land forces. The fleet had been increased to twenty-five battleships, and, in full belief that great damage had been done to the defenses, the British Command was confident that the Straits would be forced.

Sir Ian Hamilton had been sent to command the troops assembled for the Dardanelles operations. He arrived at the British base on March 17, and, on finding that transports had been "improperly loaded," the British general decided that he must delay the landing of the troops "to redistribute the troops on the



transports.”<sup>1</sup> For this reason Sir Ian Hamilton decided that the entire transport fleet must return to Egypt to be reloaded, and this was actually done, resulting in a delay of about six weeks.<sup>2</sup> It is needless to emphasize the opportunity that this delay gave the Turks to prepare defenses for Gallipoli against a landing force that had so plainly announced its intention of attacking the peninsula.

In spite of the withdrawal of the military force, it was determined to persevere with the naval attack. Vice Admiral Carden had resigned his command on account of ill health, and Vice Admiral de Robeck had taken command of the fleet. After a preparation by mine sweeping, the great fleet was moved inside the Straits, and a determined attempt was made to force the Narrows (March 18, 1915). It is plain that the damage done to the land defenses had not been as great as was estimated. The official report says, “A heavy fire was opened on the ships — all the ships being hit several times during this part of the action.” The forts were reported silenced at 1.25 P.M., and a new division of battleships advanced to take up the task. Again silencing the forts proved only temporary, as the forts renewed their fire at 2.36 P.M., and in addition a new danger was encountered. Large numbers of mines floating with the current were reported “in areas hitherto swept clear.” This two-fold defense was a check to the British attack. The French battleship *Bouvet* and the British ships *Ocean* and *Irresistible* were sunk. The *Gaulois* and *Inflexible* were also badly damaged. “The bombardment and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ian Hamilton. First Dispatch.

<sup>2</sup> “Before doing anything else I had to redistribute the troops on the transports to suit the order of their debarkation. . . . With your Lordship’s approval, I ordered all the transports, except those of the Australian Infantry Brigade and the details camped at Lemnos Island, to the Egyptian ports.” Sir Ian Hamilton. First Dispatch.

the mine-sweeping operations terminated when darkness fell.”<sup>1</sup>

This was the end of the attempt to force the Dardanelles by the fleet alone, although at first it was reported that the power of the fleet over the fortresses was assured. In spite of this optimism the War office had become convinced that a combined military and naval operation was essential.

After a long delay the military force of Sir Ian Hamilton was ready to land on Gallipoli (April 25-26, 1915). There was not sufficient reconnaissance of the points of landing to prepare the way for the troops who were to land. Ships from the fleet covered the debarkation of the troops with their guns, but there was no serious bombardment of the points of landing. As a result of this, the preparation of the Turks for defense was a costly surprise. The long delay had given them ample time and opportunity to devise means of resistance which caused great loss to the British troops. Barbed wire had been strung along the edge of the surf, and Turkish troops supplied with machine guns and artillery were hidden along the shore in positions to harass the landing parties at short range. Undisturbed by preliminary bombardment, these Turkish troops caused enormous losses. Large numbers were killed in the boats and many more on the beaches. With the guns of the great fleet available, there might have been a bombardment of the adjacent shores that would have made it impossible for the Turks to remain in position to do so much harm.

After desperate fighting the Allied troops gained a foothold on the southwestern end of the Gallipoli peninsula with battalions some of which had lost from one third to one half of their strength, — and were

<sup>1</sup> Official Report.

too exhausted to advance their attacks.<sup>1</sup> A part of this British force was the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps which became known as "Anzac" from the initials of this name. After a time the battered army attempted to move forward, but found the Turks too strong for them, and the armies intrenched against one another. From this time to the end the Gallipoli fighting was a series of useless attacks and counter attacks from intrenchments, with great losses and no results of any importance.

This state of things dragged along through the summer until the inevitable end at the last of the year, when the project was abandoned. There had been an attempt to change the result in August, when a landing of reinforcements was made at Suvla Bay, with the purpose of combining in a simultaneous attack with the forces already on Gallipoli. But this landing was nearly as costly as the first, and the two movements, although intended to be in combination, were so far apart in time that the Turks were able to defeat each British attack in detail.

The Dardanelles project was a tragic failure, costly in men, material, and prestige. Its failure dragged along through the year of 1915, the events of which are to be related in following chapters, and it must be remembered that later in the year its effect was especially harmful on the hesitating nations, Greece and Bulgaria; but this failure was not apparent at first, and in the early part of 1915 the optimism of the Entente Allies had not been impaired.

<sup>1</sup> "An advance was impossible until a reorganization could be effected, and it only remained to entrench the positions gained and to perfect the arrangements for bringing up ammunition, water, and supplies to the ridges." Sir Ian Hamilton. First Dispatch.

## CHAPTER X

### OFFENSIVES OF ENTENTE ALLIES, 1915<sup>1</sup>

#### ON THE WESTERN FRONT

AT the beginning of the year 1915 the intrenched Western front had become a definite line of battle extending from the North Sea to Switzerland. There had been intermittent fighting in the winter, but nothing had happened to change the general situation, which had become a deadlock, — and remained one, in fact, until much greater forces were used to break the intrenched lines. The line of battle was about five hundred miles long, and of this great length the French held all except about fifty miles at the first of the year. From this time the British front was gradually increased.

The original British professional army had practically disappeared in consequence of the great losses from Mons to the Battle of Ypres in 1914, the fighting about Ypres having taken the largest toll. The old British army had been replaced, and an enlarged army was being provided by voluntary enlistments procured by means of a campaign that was carried on throughout Great Britain, in which every appeal was made to the patriotism of the people. The British Government had delayed asking for conscription on account of a mistaken confidence in its ability to secure enough men by this method to finish the war.

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 7 at the end of Chapter 16.



It is true that a great many men were secured in this way, and the British colonies were also sending troops in increasing numbers; but the stream of men that flowed into France was not sufficient to overwhelm the Germans. As has been said, the possibilities of the German fighting machine were not realized at this time, neither had the British Government measured the enormous demands for men and munitions<sup>1</sup> that were destined to result from the vast scale on which the war was being fought and from the increased preparations of the Germans.

So little was the situation understood that there was the greatest confidence in the preparations that were being made by the Allies. They were considered ample for the occasion, and it was assumed in the Allied countries that the spring of 1915 would see the beginning of an offensive that the Germans would not be able to withstand. This feeling was universal in Great Britain. The truth was that the stage was set for the first of the many promised "Allied Offensives" in the West, which were foredoomed to defeat because of insufficient preparations and consequent lack of strength to follow up any initial advantage that might be gained.

In France there was the same universal confidence that the Allies would be strong enough to break the German lines. In February and March the French had carried on a series of attacks in the Champagne with artillery and infantry combined, which were regarded as practise for the French troops in the tactics that were to be used in their great offensive. The results increased the confidence of their troops and confirmed the French belief in the superiority of the Allied artillery.

<sup>1</sup> "As no one foresaw the vast supply of munitions that proved to be necessary on land." Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, R.N., "The Dover Patrol."

But the British attempt at Neuve Chapelle in March, 1915, was the first real test of the Allied preparations. At this time the British army had been increased to half a million men, and the Battle of Neuve Chapelle was a serious attempt to push through an offensive by using the newly prepared combination of artillery and infantry attacks. What was considered at the time a very heavy concentration of artillery was made on this sector, consisting of field artillery, field howitzers and many heavy guns. This artillery was to attempt to advance by successive stages a barrier fire to cover advances of infantry, after a heavy preliminary bombardment to destroy the enemy positions.

Early in the morning of March 10 this bombardment began, and it was continued with great intensity for thirty-five minutes. Then the range was advanced, and the infantry easily captured the German positions, which had been badly pounded by the artillery. But, after this first success, the attack failed to win any real results, although desperate fighting was continued through the eleventh and twelfth. The coördination between the artillery and the infantry became disorganized, and the advances of the infantry and of the barrage fire were not well timed.

There were German counter attacks north of Neuve Chapelle on the fourteenth and fifteenth, and the result of the battle was a bitter disappointment to the British people.

It is interesting as a comment on the great scale of the war that, in the first reports of success in the British papers, the Battle of Neuve Chapelle was described in London as the "battle bigger than Waterloo", when it had actually been a test that proved, in The World War, any such artillery and infantry attack was on too small a scale, even against only a small part of the formidable German positions on the Western front.



It is true that the plans of the action had been imperfect, and there were mistakes of the Staff in the execution of these plans, but, outside of this, the battle showed that there must be a much greater force behind an attack, ready to follow up any advantage that might be gained, if the Allies were to hope to win tactical results of real importance.

This lesson was not appreciated at the time, and the Battle of Neuve Chapelle was considered merely a premature effort to begin a drive. Great things were still expected of the coming offensive by the Entente Allies, but it is evident that the Germans had taken the true measure of the Allied weakness in offensive power, and the next battle on the Western front was quickly changed into a German counter attack, although, as it had been necessary to send German troops to the East for the Russian campaign, there was no idea of a serious German offensive on the Western front in the spring of 1915. This German counter attack showed that the German military leaders had no fear the Allies would be strong enough to dislodge them from their positions on the Western front.

This next battle was in the regions of Ypres, where the fighting had been so intense in the fall of 1914, and the series of actions was known as the Second Battle of Ypres. In this sector the British and French troops were side by side. On April 17 the British had exploded mines under positions on Hill 60, and had captured the hill. The Germans then began counter attacks on the British positions, which continued for days, with a heavy bombardment of Ypres.

On April 22, the Germans suddenly made the first attack in which there was a tactical use of poisonous gas. This first gas employed was a heavy chlorine gas brought into the German advanced positions in ordinary cylinders to be released with a favoring breeze. In this method of attack, the first necessity

was a moderate steady wind blowing in the direction of the enemy. This condition the Germans found on April 22. Late in the afternoon of that day the gas was released in front of the German positions, and it drifted before the wind across to the positions of the Allies. The gas, being heavier than air, lay along the ground like a fog and penetrated the Allied trenches where it caused great consternation. Hundreds of men were suffocated, and the entire area affected was demoralized.

Most of these positions had been held by French Colonial and Canadian troops, and for the time being these defenders were put out of action, in spite of great gallantry on the part of the Canadians. There was practically a gap in the Allied line, but, as has been said, no serious offensive had been planned by the Germans. The attack had been made late in the day, and there was no German force ready to win anything more than a local success. Consequently the first tactical use of the new weapon was under circumstances that prevented its having any decisive result.<sup>1</sup> It is useless to speculate upon what might have been the issue if this gas attack had been made to prepare the way for a German assault in force.

This first use of poisonous gas by the Germans made a great sensation, and the women of France were at once employed in making thousands of primitive cloth sponges to be worn by the Allied troops when threatened by gas. These were the first of the "gas masks" of various forms which made it possible to withstand attacks with chlorine gas. From this time on, throughout the war, gas warfare became a part of the tactics of both sides, and both sides began to devise different gases and different ways of using them.

<sup>1</sup> "Its surprise effect was very great. Unfortunately we were not in a position to exploit it to the full." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

Other gas attacks were made near Ypres in April and May, 1915, by the Germans, but with no great result, and the use of gas only served to make the fighting in Flanders more sordid and deadly than even the battles of the fall of 1914 in the same region. There were the same great losses and desperate struggles with the same barrenness of results. The British lines were pushed back nearer to Ypres, but that was all that was gained by the Germans. The French on the British left had been reinforced, and, as in the battles of 1914, the fighting died away from exhaustion.

In April the French had made a determined attempt to drive the Germans out of the St. Mihiel salient, which cut into the French line east of Verdun, but they had not been able to have any effect upon this strong position. In May the French launched the long expected and carefully planned offensive, with the combined attacks of artillery and infantry as prepared. This French attack was planned to take place in the Artois,<sup>1</sup> and the object was to take Lens and advance toward Douai. At the same time, in conjunction with the French attack, the British were to attempt to capture Lille, the two movements making a combined offensive from which great results were expected.

General Foch, who commanded the French, had gathered his full strength of artillery and massed it for the tactics of barrage fire which were expected to accomplish so much against the intrenched Germans. The action opened May 9, 1915, with a heavy bombardment of the German positions in that sector. After this artillery preparation the French infantry advanced, and for a time they made gains. Still using their heavy concentration of artillery fire, the French continued to advance for several days of desperate fighting. Then their advance became slower and more difficult, as they found one strong German position

<sup>1</sup> Battle of the Artois.

after another confronting them, until the French were stopped before they were able to capture Lens. The British attack,<sup>1</sup> made in conjunction with the French, was also checked in the same way before it could get anywhere near Lille, and this was the end of the spring offensive of 1915 on the Western front, from which so much had been hoped. The test of battle had proved its inherent weakness against the new conditions of The World War.

There was desultory fighting through the summer of no especial importance in results, and it was not until the fall that the Entente Allies were able to attempt another offensive in the West. It had become evident that the Germans had taken the right measure of the insufficient preparations of the French and the British, and the German defense had been so well arranged that not only had the Germans been able to beat off all Allied attacks while German troops were being concentrated in the East, but the Allied attacks were not threatening enough to make the Germans feel the need to recall any troops to the West. Consequently not only did the Entente Allies fail to win in the West, but they were not even able to make a military diversion that would help the military situation on the Russian front, where a fearful change for the worse had taken place.

<sup>1</sup> Battle of Festubert, May 16-24, 1915.



## CHAPTER XI

OFFENSIVES OF ENTENTE ALLIES, 1915<sup>1</sup>

## ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT

THROUGHOUT the winter of 1914-1915, Russian and Turkish armies fought in the Caucasus. The campaign in this difficult country was like those contested in the same regions in the fifties and in the seventies, with the Turks again aiming to capture Kars. Fighting in the Caucasus was almost a matter of course when the Turks and Russians were at war, and this was one of the few events in The World War that followed traditional military precedents. This Turkish campaign in the Caucasus had been encouraged by the Central Powers, and Enver Pasha, the partisan of the Germans in Turkey, had been urged to send a strong army into the Caucasus to make a diversion in favor of the hard-pressed Austrians. Enver Pasha himself assumed command and undertook the task of overwhelming an army of about 100,000 Russians with a Turkish army considerably greater in numbers. He won some early successes, but when the Turks attempted an enveloping movement in this difficult mountainous country, with snow choking the passes and separating the Turkish corps from one another, the Turkish army was badly cut up in detail, and Enver Pasha was obliged to retreat to Erzeroum, after losing half his strength. (January, 1915.) The Russians also occupied Tabriz in Persia in the same month.

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 8 at the end of this chapter.

These operations did not divert enough Russian troops from the Austrian theater to have any effect on the military situation.<sup>1</sup> The threat of a Turkish invasion of Egypt, with an attack on the Suez Canal, was more effective as a diversion at this time, as it prevented the British from moving troops out of Egypt, and retarded the decision to send a military force to the Dardanelles. There never was a strong Turkish army gathered for a serious invasion of Egypt, and it was never really necessary to retain a large number of British troops in that region. The only attempt on the Suez Canal was made in February, 1915, and this attack, on the part of the Turks, was undertaken with a small force, which made it an easy matter for the British to drive the invaders back across the desert.

On the German and Austrian fronts at the beginning of 1915 the Russians were still persisting in their offensives. The Russian troops were again advancing in East Prussia and in Galicia: Przemysl was for the second time closely besieged: and the Russians were making preparations to cross the Carpathians and invade Hungary. There had been another German drive at Warsaw in the first days of February, opening with a heavy bombardment in a blinding snowstorm, but, after making some gains, the Germans were repulsed by Russian counter attacks, and this move against Warsaw did not relieve the situation in other regions.

In East Prussia the Russians had been pushing again into the territory where the Russian armies had been so decisively defeated in the Battle of Tannenberg. In this second invasion the Russians were attempting to overcome the strong defense offered by the natural barrier of the Masurian Lakes, by

<sup>1</sup> "The fighting on the Caucasian front did not bring us the relief we had hoped for as regards Russia." "Ludendorff's Own Story."



working around each flank and pushing forward in the north and in the south. With their right flank north of the lakes the Russians were nearing Tilsit, and in the south the Russian troops were moving in the direction of Thorn.

Again the Russian invasion was short-lived, and for a second time in February, 1915, Hindenburg proved his mastery of tactics in East Prussia. Extensive preparations were made for a winter campaign, and, making attacks on the Russian left to screen his real purpose, the German general used the East Prussian railroads to move large bodies of German troops to the north. By this means he succeeded in enveloping the Russian right wing with greatly superior German forces in the region of Gumbinnen and Pilkallen. (The Winter Battle, February 7-21, 1915.) The entire right wing of the Russian army was driven into the forest region and overwhelmed. Only detached fragments made their way back into Russia. The rest of the Russian army retreated, fighting obstinately, and succeeded in getting back to the frontier. The Russians had lost 105,000 prisoners, and this battle defeated the last offensive against East Prussia. After this second disaster there was no attempt to make a new invasion.

The Germans still continued their attacks in the northern region. On February 24, 1915, Przasnysz was captured in a new German drive against Poland, but it was retaken by a Russian counter attack two days later. All of these operations in the north had been carried on by Hindenburg with great success, in spite of the handicap of scant resources in numbers available for any offensive, but all the lessons of his campaigns had shown that the northern frontier did not afford the best base for the main attack against the Russian armies. This became so evident that it was decided to make the great German offensive,

which was being planned against Russia for the spring of 1915, from a base in the southern region. This meant that the main attack against Russia would begin in Galicia, instead of following the lines of the various drives in the sector of Warsaw. From this time all the tactical combinations of the Germans were molded to fit the approaching concentration of the Austro-Germans, which had been planned to take place in Galicia. This was entirely unsuspected by the Russian Command, and by the military leaders of the Entente Allies.

On the contrary, if the reader will remember the prevailing military opinion in the spring of 1915, it will be recalled that great things were expected from the Russian armies at the time. There was no suspicion of a calamity hanging over Russia in the spring of 1915. It was assumed that the Russian "steam roller" was ready to break down any resistance that could be offered by the Central Powers.

It is not strange that this opinion prevailed among the Entente Allies. In spite of all the efforts of Hindenburg, the Germans had not been able to break up the Russian offensive in the southeast. Cracow was thought to be in danger. Przemyśl was closely besieged, and the fall of the great Austrian fortress was only a matter of weeks. The fact that straggling parties of Russian troops had penetrated the Carpathians was accepted as meaning the advance guard of an invasion of Hungary in the near future.

It was true that Przemyśl was lost to the Austrians. The fortress surrendered March 22, 1915, and this important victory meant that the Russians had captured about 125,000 prisoners, and large forces of Russian troops were released from the siege for active operations against the Teutonic armies. The fall of Przemyśl made a great impression in Europe, and it was thought to be the augury of greater victories

over the Central Powers. In fact, it marked the high tide of the Russian successes. The Russians had already been forced back in Bukowina, and they had barely been able to check the Teutons southwest of Czernowitz. All this had been brought about by reinforcements of German troops, which were at last being liberally supplied to help the Austrians. The confidently expected offensive in the Carpathians had in reality met checks that practically stopped the Russian advances. In these regions also the Austrians had been reinforced, and the same condition of deadlock was being imposed that existed in other parts of the battle line.

From this time two great adverse elements were working against the Russians. The first and most important was the fact that the Russian armies were always badly provided with artillery, munitions, and supplies of all kinds. As a result of the long-continued European policies of keeping the Russians shut off from the warm water seaports of trade, Russia had never been able to develop the great industrial resources of the nation. To understand this it is only necessary to study the map.

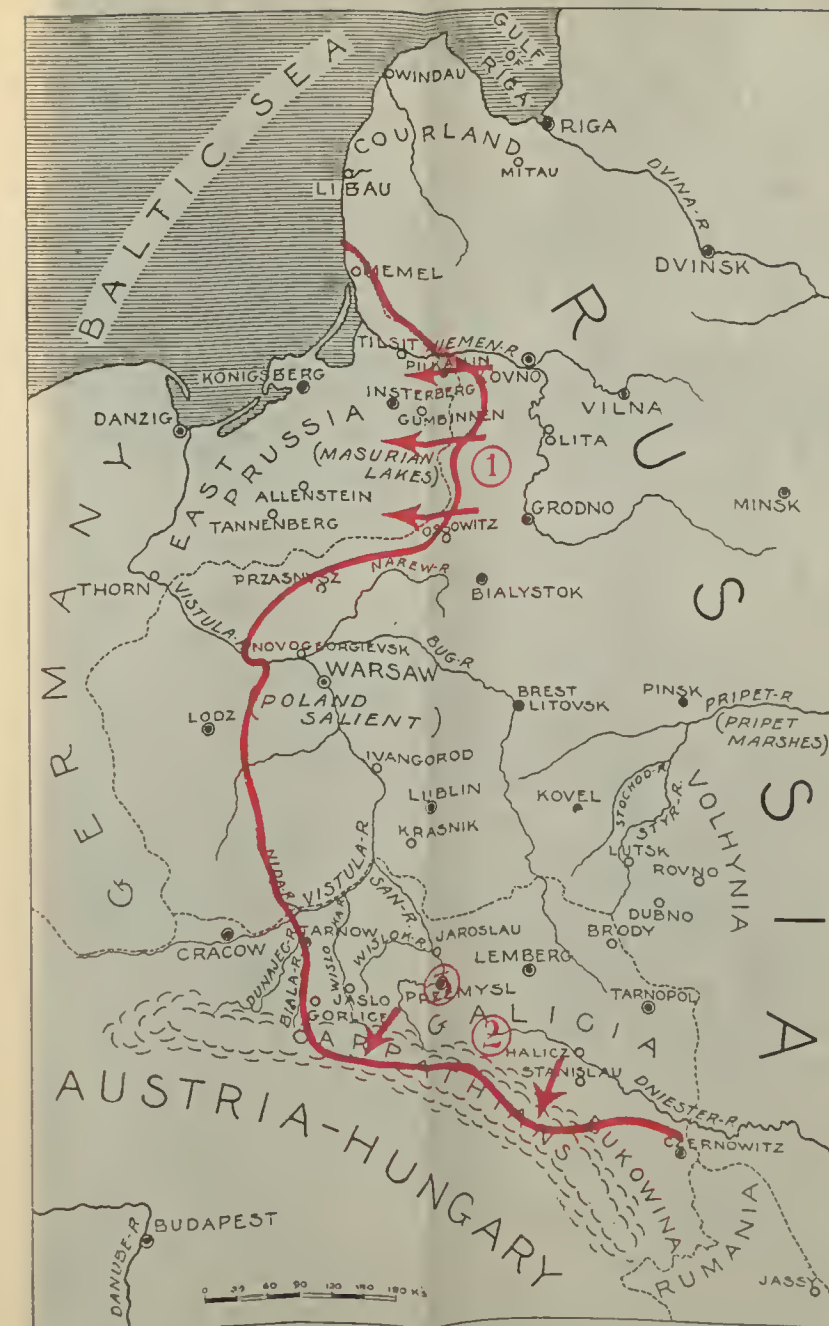
Russia had always been excluded from the free use of the Dardanelles, the only entrance to the Black Sea, which would have been the natural commercial distributing center for Russia, and also the natural outlet for Russian trade. The Dardanelles were sealed in The World War by the successful defense of the Turks. The Central Powers were able to control the Baltic, as explained — and this made the Baltic ports unavailable. The railway from the Murman coast to Petrograd was incomplete, and the White Sea ports (Archangel, etc.), were frozen for a great part of the year. The only other method, transportation across Siberia, meant a thin stream of supplies, and a long, slow process in distributing them. With the

MAP No. 8. ATTEMPTED OFFENSIVES OF THE ALLIES, 1915

THE HIGH TIDE OF RUSSIAN SUCCESSES

(This map is diagrammatic only)

- ① Renewed invasion of East Prussia by the Russians, defeated in the Winter Battle (February, 1915).
  - ② Russian attacks in the Carpathians.
  - ③ Przemyśl surrendered to the Russians March 22, 1915.
- Battle line of April, 1915, the limit of Russian success in The World War.





small amount of munitions that Russia was able to produce, it was impossible to overcome this constant handicap of lack of supplies for the Russian armies. These armies had been assembled with great rapidity. The Russians were excellent soldiers, and they had very great numbers of men to draw upon for troops, but in this war, in which the new development of artillery soon became so great a force, the Russians were always at a disadvantage.

The other great factor against the Russians was the condition that resulted from the military situation in the spring of 1915, when the Allies were unable to press the Germans hard in the West. From this time on Russia was compelled to bear the main burden of the war in 1915.<sup>1</sup> France and Great Britain simply were not able to do their share of the actual fighting in that year. This was due to the fact that France and Great Britain had not been able to develop sufficient military strength for a dangerous offensive against Germany—the only thing that would have compelled the Germans to divert a great part of their forces to the Western front. This failure left the Teutonic allies free to take advantage of their central position, and to move their greatest strength against Russia, while merely holding off the Entente Allies in the West with comparatively slight effort. This was not understood at the time, but Russia was destined to bear the brunt of cumulative Teutonic assaults for two years of uphill fighting, with losses and suffering such as no nation has ever endured, which finally resulted in the Russian collapse and social revolution.

<sup>1</sup> "The future hopes of the Entente were, for the moment, based on Russia alone." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

## CHAPTER XII

## ITALY IN THE WAR

FROM the first outbreak of the war, Italy had been in a ferment, and on May 23, 1915, Italy declared war. But it was war against Austria-Hungary alone, not war against Germany, and it was the result of a popular demand from the Italian people for "*Nostra Guerra*" to win *Italia Irredenta*. To understand this new element in the war it is necessary to trace at some length the growth of "*Irredentism*" which made Italy unique among the fighting nations in her aims and aspirations.

For sixty years there had grown in the Italian mind the idea of "*unredeemed Italy*." By this is meant the outlying territories with Italian inhabitants, which the newly united Italy has longed to make a part of its country. The strong grasp of this "*Irredentist*" ideal upon the Italian people is hard to realize unless one considers the unusual conditions which brought into being the present Italian nation.

Though inhabited largely by persons of Italian descent, these provinces never were a part of the Italian nation, because until the middle of the nineteenth century there was no such thing as Italy, in the sense of an Italian nation. The Italian States and cities before their union were separate communities.

Like the Greeks, the Italians followed their natural trend from living on the shores of the Mediterranean, and they became enterprising colonists and skilful seamen. With the waning of the Greek Empire,

Italian shipping actually controlled the trade of the Mediterranean, and Italian seamen became the most enterprising navigators in the world. Columbus was only one of a host of such Italian mariners.

The great ocean routes had not been developed, and, outside of their own trade, the Italians became the common carriers of the world. The Italian ports were also the great clearing houses of the other nations. Consequently for many centuries Italy was the world's center of the arts and sciences. In Italy these reached a height of development never before attained, and Italy became the recognized source of all such knowledge. Besides this the capital and centralized control of the powerful medieval Roman Catholic Church was in Italy. Yet in spite of all these advantages the Italians did not unite into a nation.

The first creating impulse for a free and united Italy came from the French Revolution and the invasion of Napoleon's armies against the Austrians. Savoy was at once made a French province; but Napoleon, as a part of his operations against the Austrians, fostered Italian independence (*Cisalpine Republic*, 1797, etc.), and the seed was planted which was destined to produce the Italian nation.

The reactionary Congress of Vienna reduced the Italian States to their former dependent condition, but Piedmont and Savoy (this last restored by the Treaties of 1815) were left powerful by the addition of Sardinia (substituted for Sicily in 1817). The name of this kingdom became Sardinia, and, with the statesmanship of the great Cavour, Sardinia supplied the element of strength necessary to make successful the idealistic movement of "*Young Italy*" for unity and freedom, which sprang up in the years of revived liberal thought in Europe, leading to 1848.<sup>1</sup>

The romantic history of the unification of Italy

<sup>1</sup> Mazzini, Balbo, Gilberti, etc.



under King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia is well known. This was completed in 1872.<sup>1</sup> Savoy had again become a French province in 1860, on account of the great assistance given by Napoleon III against Austria. Venice had been taken from Austria, after the Italian alliance with Prussia in the successful war of 1866, and Italy's boundaries had become those existing at the outbreak of the present war.

Centuries of enmities had been overcome by idealists, whose thoughts had been quickened by the French Revolution and by its revival in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. United Italy as a nation was the concrete result of the idealistic thought of Young Italy. With this great achievement before their eyes, is it strange that there survived in the minds of Italians the idealists' longing to complete the union of all territories with Italian inhabitants?

In the sixties the Irredentists were a secret society. Afterward they remained an important influence in Italian thought. At times this element was stronger than all others, but at all times its propaganda swayed the people to a great degree. Allied with Irredentism is another aspiration of the Italians, — their desire for Italian colonies, and the revival of Italian control of the Mediterranean.

Italy had longed for Tunis as a colony, and it was the occupation of this city by the French (1881) which alienated the Italians from France and drove Italy into the Triple Alliance (1882). Italy's unfortunate attempts in Abyssinia gave her colonial ambitions a severe setback. But the war with Turkey (1911) gave the Italians occupation of Tripoli and a hold upon some of the islands of the Aegean Sea. Italy's desire for influence in Albania also became an issue, and there was renewed friction with Austria-Hungary, which increased the resentment, always dormant in

<sup>1</sup> Rome, capital of Italy, 1872.

the Italians, against Austria as the possessor of "unredeemed" Italian provinces. All this had greatly increased the influence of the Irredentists in the recent years before The World War.

Early in the war Italy had notified her Teutonic allies that the Triple Alliance was defensive only, and that she refused to join them in the war. But military preparations, necessary in her situation, naturally increased the enthusiasm of the Italian people, and finally, in spite of the strongest German influence, the popular demand grew so overpowering that all opposition was swept aside. With great outbursts of popular enthusiasm, Italy declared war.

Although Italy entered the war in response to this popular demand, it is now known that the Italian leaders also, before the declaration of war, in a secret treaty signed at London, secured from the Entente Allies recognition of Italy's claims to the Trentino, Trieste, the eastern littoral of the Adriatic, with acquisitions on the Aegean Sea. The ambitions of Italy soared to a great height, and all her military efforts in the war were at once concentrated on securing her most cherished aims, the Trentino and Trieste.

As a result of this unusual situation, Italy was not at war with Germany, but the nation was intent on its own objects. Through the winter of 1914-1915 the Italian army had been carefully prepared for war, and the Italian Commander-in-Chief, General Cadorna, had already planned the campaign which would be undertaken as soon as Italy declared war. His offensive was ready to be carried out on the lines of the ambitions of the nation, and, when war was declared by Italy, General Cadorna at once undertook active operations to win the Trentino and Trieste. The enthusiasm of the Italian people was very great. The Italian army was highly organized and had a very high reputation in Europe. Yet, in consequence of this

use of the Italian army, the effort of the Italian nation had very little effect upon the military situation in 1915.

It had been confidently predicted that the Trentino would be overrun in a few weeks, and the first reports of Italian successes greatly encouraged the people, but it soon became evident that something was wrong



NO. 9. THE TWO ITALIAN OBJECTIVES IN THE WAR (1915).

- (1) Campaign to capture Trieste. Attacks on the Isonzo and in the Julian Alps.  
 (2) Attempt to conquer the Trentino.  
 (This map is diagrammatic only.)

in the Italian campaign. The fact was that the mountainous country was so difficult that it was very hard to make any progress, even against the greatly inferior Austrian forces defending these positions. The Italian operations were not even threatening enough to compel the Austrians to divert any great numbers of troops from Galicia. The Italian troops were taken into Alpine passes, where the nature of

the country made military operations almost impossible. In these mountains the fine Italian army remained for many months without accomplishing anything.<sup>1</sup>

These difficult and unprofitable operations absorbed all the military forces of the Italians, and this sums up the military history of Italy in 1915. Not only did the Italians fail to gain any military results of importance, but for these reasons the entry of a fresh, powerful nation in the war was not of any appreciable help to the Russians against the great Austro-German offensive which had developed in May, 1915, the month of Italy's declaration of war.

<sup>1</sup> "The hopes placed in the defensive strength of the mountainous territory on the Austro-Hungarian and Italian frontier were altogether fulfilled. . . ." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.



### CHAPTER XIII

#### THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE OF 1915 AGAINST THE RUSSIANS<sup>1</sup>

THE preparations for the great German offensive of 1915 against the Russians, which had been planned to begin in Galicia, had been completed in April. There was also to be a strong drive of German armies in the north through Courland, in combination with this main attack in the southeast. The German and Austrian armies in the southeast had been consolidated, and the chief command had been given to Mackensen, the Germans' most trusted executive. It is one of the strange events of the war that this great concentration of Teutonic forces was not known to the Russian Command. The Grand Duke Nicholas' generals were ignorant of the scope of the German activities. Operations on the part of the Germans were expected by the Russians, but it was thought that they would be similar to those in 1914 and early in the year 1915. The real plan for the great offensive was a secret, and the fact that such a vast movement could be executed as a surprise entitled it to be called the "best kept secret of the war." Falkenhayn states that the plans were "not even made known to the Austro-Hungarian G. H. Q. until the troops were already entrained."

The basis of tactics for the Austro-German drive against the Russians in the southeast was the great strength of artillery, which had been prepared in the winter of 1914-1915. It was the new use of this artil-

lery that made the tactics in this campaign different from any that had been undertaken in warfare. As has been said, the Germans had not remained satisfied with the methods of artillery developed in the campaigns against France. They had produced a great number of heavy batteries<sup>1</sup> to be used in the field in conjunction with field guns, and they had provided enormous quantities of high explosive ammunition. The German method for the tactical use of this artillery was very simple. These guns were to be massed against an enemy's position, insuring a bombardment such as had never been known before. This powerful artillery would dominate the artillery in any existing Russian defenses, and would be able to destroy these defenses.

This was an advance over the idea of barrage fire as developed by the Entente Allies in the artillery concentrations at Neuve Chapelle and in the Artois, though planned to be used in the same way in connection with advances of infantry. The defect in the scheme of the Allies was that their artillery fire, advancing in waves to cover the infantry which followed, was not destructive enough. The fire of the German artillery was intended to destroy an enemy's positions, and thus make way for the infantry advance, when the defenders had been blasted out of their intrenchments. The massed artillery was then to be moved forward to repeat the same tactics against the next positions occupied by the enemy.

Such an advance would be slow, but it would be impossible to resist its approaches, unless an equality of artillery could be established by an enemy. It was known that this was out of the question for the Russians, with their weakness in artillery. The German Command believed that against the Russian armies this mighty battering ram, used in conjunction with

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 10 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> "The heavy field-howitzers." Ludendorff.

strong forces of troops, would move forward with an irresistible momentum that would only be measured by the time needed to move the guns and their supplies.

The German military calculations of 1915 were sound, in contrast to those of 1914. The new German tactics against the Russians could not be defeated, and when they were put into operation the Russian armies were doomed to disaster, which all their gallant fighting in the campaign could not prevent. Nothing has ever been as effective as the relentless progress of this all-destroying military machine which had been created by the Germans.

The part of the Russian front chosen by the Austro-Germans for the first blow of the offensive was the line in the region of the Dunajec and Biala rivers, where the army of General Dimitricff was in position. It is true that this Russian army was intrenched, but there were no prepared positions in the rear, and no other preparations to withstand any such assault. It was evident that German operations in 1915 were expected to be similar to those in the past. On April 28 there was an Austro-German attack in the direction of Gorlice, and on May 1, north of Gorlice, there was the first bombardment by the massed artillery of the Austro-Germans. The result was immediately decisive, and fulfilled all the expectations of the German Command. The hapless Russians were literally blasted out of their trenches by artillery fire. The surprise was complete, and there was no defense possible. The Biala River was at once crossed by the Teuton infantry, and the Dunajec-Biala positions were captured almost without resistance,<sup>1</sup> as the Russian defenders had been swept away by the storm of shells. Gorlice was taken in the same way, and on May 2 the whole Russian line in this region was in retreat.

<sup>1</sup> Battle of the Dunajec, also called by the Germans Battle of Gorlice-Tarnow.

No attempt could be made by the Russians to check the advance at the Wisloka River, and the Austro-Germans effected a crossing beyond Jaslo, with the Russian armies again in retreat. This last dislocation of the Russian armies endangered the flank of the Russian troops in the Carpathians, and it was only by heavy fighting, and with great losses, that General Brusiloff was able to make good his retreat from the mountainous country and conform to the alignment of the other Russian forces.

By this time the German offensive had been fully developed, and its irresistible tactics were appreciated. It was evident that no defense the Russians could offer would stop the onward drive of Mackensen's center.<sup>1</sup> The Russian Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas, took command in person, and the Russians attempted to check the momentum of the Austro-German drive by counter attacks on the flanks of the Austro-Germans. The Russians were able to make some gains in this way, but they accomplished nothing that hampered the unbroken advance of the main attack, which moved steadily along at a rate only regulated by the transportation of the heavy guns. As the strong masses in the Austro-German center advanced, the Russian troops on the flanks were also forced to give way.

On May 14 the Russian armies were at the San River. Jaroslau was captured the night of the fifteenth. In the next few days the Austro-Germans had crossed the San in many places, and their massed artillery was being moved forward to attack Przemyśl, the capture of which by the Russians had aroused so much exultation among the Entente Allies in March. The case with which the heavy artillery battered the Russians out of this fortress was a great contrast to the long siege by the Russians. Efforts were made to save

<sup>1</sup> Called by Falkenhayn "the spearhead group."



as many supplies as possible from Przemysl, but the Germans could not be long retarded from taking the fortress, which fell on June 2, and the Germans drove on toward Lemberg.

In the meantime, in coördination with the advance in Galicia, the prepared German forces were pushing forward in the north. Advancing from East Prussia the Germans overran Courland in May and June. Libau had been taken, and the Germans were near Windau, but the real threat of the Germans from the north was directed against the salient of Poland. A concentration of German troops was being made to eat into the Polish salient from the north, while the Austro-German armies in the southeast were to make a simultaneous attack from Galicia.

The assaults of Mackensen's Austro-German armies in the southeast had continued methodically and successfully, in spite of Russian counter attacks on the flanks, and on June 22 Lemberg was captured from the Russians. Halicz was taken on June 28. These Russian reverses had resulted in the loss of all Galicia, to say nothing of the immense Russian losses in men and material in the one-sided fighting and constant retreats. But the German strategy had no intention of being satisfied with these results. The German Command at this time had the strongest and best equipped forces the Teutons were able to put into the field, and the next two weeks were spent in arranging and preparing these forces for the double assault upon the salient of Poland.

The Austro-Germans began this great attack upon the Russians in the middle of July, and there was military activity from the sea to Bukowina. The Germans had pushed farther north. Windau and Mitau were captured, and the Germans approached Riga. But the serious danger was the double attack from the north and from the south against the salient of Poland,

with Warsaw near its apex. From the north the Germans advanced, and on July 14 captured Przasnysz. In the following days they forced the line of the Narew northeast of Novo Georgievsk. From the south the Austro-Germans struck toward Lublin in the region of Krasnic, where there was desperate fighting in a vain attempt by the Russians to check the advance of Mackensen's forces. This proved impossible; the Austro-Germans pushed through to Lublin, and they were assailing Ivangorod from the south and west.

These first Teutonic successes were enough to show that it was impossible for the Russians to hold the Polish salient, which was being eaten into so rapidly on both sides. Against the heavy German guns no reliance could be placed in the triangle of fortresses, Novo Georgievsk, Ivangorod, and Brest Litovsk, which before the war had been thought the strongest support for Russian armies that might be called upon to defend Warsaw. In this crisis it was evident that any armies that attempted to defend the Polish capital would be inevitably cut off from the other Russian armies and overwhelmed. Consequently the decision was made to abandon Warsaw, and only to attempt a delaying resistance to allow supplies to be taken from the doomed city. Every effort was made to remove munitions and stores, but the Russian resistance could not be prolonged for many days. On August 5 the Vistula bridges were blown up, and Warsaw was evacuated by the Russians. The Germans occupied the city the same day. Ivangorod had been captured on August 4.

The great fortress of Novo Georgievsk, just northwest of Warsaw, had been well supplied with munitions and provisions, and it was left garrisoned to resist the Germans, in the hope that it might withstand a long siege and give trouble to the German armies

moving east, while the Russians formed a defense on the line of Kovno, Grodno, and Brest Litovsk. The hope that Novo Georgievsk would offer a prolonged resistance was vain,<sup>1</sup> and this fortress shared the fate of Namur and Antwerp, only holding out until August 20, when the fortress was surrendered with over seven hundred guns.

The fortress of Kovno on the Niemen had been taken by the northern German armies on August 17, and any expectation that the Russians would be able to hold a definite line against the continued German assaults was soon proved to be without foundation. The fortress of Ossowitz fell on August 23, Brest Litovsk on August 25, Bialystok on August 26, Olita on August 27, Lutsk on August 31, and Grodno on September 2.

All this time the Russian armies were being harried in continued retreat. On September 5 the Czar came to the defeated Russian troops and assumed the command in person. The Grand Duke Nicholas was sent to command in the Caucasus. The presence of the head of their church was a great encouragement to the Russian troops, but the Germans still advanced almost at will. In the north Vilna was captured on September 18, and the Russians were driven to the Dvina River. In the south the Austro-German armies captured Pinsk. Beyond these regions German advances would have meant invasions of Russia, difficult to supply and of doubtful strategic results, especially as the cold season was approaching. A campaign was also being organized by Mackensen against Serbia for which troops were needed, and the Teutonic armies were not pushed any farther into Russia. This Russian front of about nine hundred miles extending from Riga to Czernowitz remained

<sup>1</sup>"Gen. von Beseler, the conqueror of Antwerp, . . . guaranteed that there should be no question of a so-called siege." Ludendorff.

for months the basis of fighting on the Eastern front.<sup>1</sup>

Two prevailing errors in reference to this campaign should be avoided in order to arrive at a true estimate of its results. Accounts written at the time, and also many later accounts, have been filled with stories of the escapes of Russian armies from capture, and the "masterly retreat" of the Grand Duke Nicholas had become a catchword. The fact is that the initial plan of the German Command was for a steady destructive advance that would dislocate the Russian armies and drive them out of their positions with great losses in men and material. The combination of the drive in the north and the main attack through Galicia might be called an enveloping movement on a grand scale. But it can be seen that it was not of a nature to surround and capture the Russian armies, although there were frequently situations where the Russian troops were forced to retreat to avoid envelopment. A notable instance of this was the retreat of the Russians from the Polish salient, but the basis of the German tactics was to batter and dislocate the Russians by overwhelming them with massed attacks of artillery and infantry used together.<sup>2</sup> These tactics were constantly used; they were uniformly successful; and they were very destructive. The Russian losses in men and material were constant, and heavy beyond description. The truth should not be distorted by retaining the wrong impression that the movements of the Russians were merely skilfully conducted retreats instead of disastrous reverses.

The other error has been the natural sequence of

<sup>1</sup>"A continuation of the movement was impossible. . . . Quiet reigned along the front as far as the Carpathians." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

<sup>2</sup>"The annihilation of the enemy has never been hoped for from the current operations in the East, but purely and simply a decisive victory in accordance with the aims of G. H. Q." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.



the first, the optimistic feeling that the great losses of the Russians in men, material, and territory had not done much harm, as the movements had been conducted "with the Russian armies intact." To realize how far this comforting phrase was from the truth, it is only necessary to know that the Russians had lost in men a greater total than the number of Allied troops engaged in the Battle of the Marne.<sup>1</sup> The Russian losses in guns and in material had been correspondingly large. Not only was it the most disastrous campaign in all history, but the disaster was so great that there could be no comparison with any other campaign. It was the beginning of the military collapse of Russia.

The German objectives had been gained. Outside of the crushing losses inflicted upon the Russian armies, the Austro-Hungarian situation had been remedied, and the Russians had been driven far within their territories. In addition, these victories were to bring the Bulgarians into the war on the side of Germany. But, although the campaign had been successful, the reader must realize the great cost to Germany. It is true that the losses of the Central Powers had not approached those of Russia, but the enormous scale of the war was then taking its toll in the East as well as the West. It had been a great strain upon Germany to create and to maintain this new military monster. The artillery and munitions demanded a constant stream of supplies unprecedented in warfare, and, after the armies had once been organized on this vast scale, there was no possibility of retrenchment. On the contrary, these demands for men, munitions, and supplies became greater and greater, and this constant drain began to be an adverse factor for the victorious Germans which increased as the war went on.

<sup>1</sup> Falkenhayn states that the Russians had lost in the first "three months about three quarters of a million men in prisoners alone."

MAP No. 10. THE EASTERN FRONT, 1915  
THE GREAT AUSTRO-GERMAN OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE RUSSIANS  
(This map is diagrammatic only)

- ..... Austro-German battle line April, 1915.
- ① Battle of the Dunajec (Gorlice-Tarnow) and the Austro-German drive against the Russians through Galicia.
- ② Supporting German attack in the north, overrunning Courland.
- Austro-German line, advanced in the southeast at the middle of July, 1915.
- ③ Austro-German attack from the south, and ④ German attack from the north, combined assault upon the Polish salient which forced the Russians to give up Warsaw.
- Battle line at the end of 1915.



## CHAPTER XIV

### RESULTS OF THE RUSSIAN DEFEATS, 1915

#### BULGARIA ENTERS THE WAR. SERBIA OVERWHELMED. DEADLOCK ON THE ITALIAN FRONT

THE first tangible result of the German victories of 1915 was the entrance of Bulgaria on the side of Germany. From the beginning of the war there had not been much question as to the attitude of this kingdom. Bulgaria was simply waiting to see which side was the most profitable for Bulgaria to choose. The continued failure of the British attempts against the Dardanelles had a harmful effect upon the prestige of the Entente Allies, and, as the summer passed, it became evident that the Turks would be able to hold Constantinople. The inevitable consequence was that the German and Turkish influence was greatly increased in the East, and the prestige of the Entente Allies suffered correspondingly. Then came the series of great German victories over the Russians, and the German diplomats had no more trouble in persuading Bulgaria<sup>1</sup> to take sides with the Central Powers.

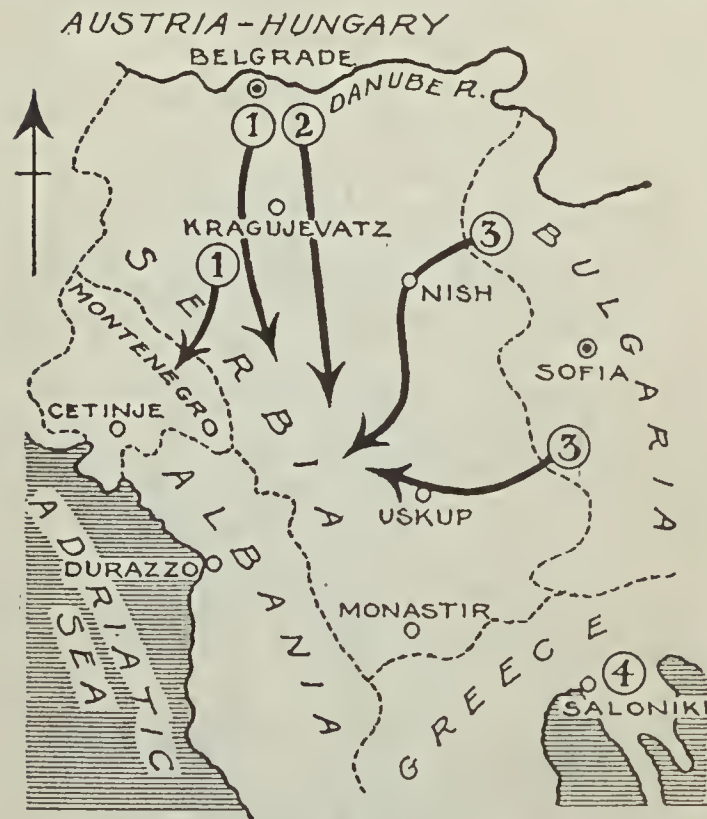
By the end of September there was great tension in the Balkans. The Bulgarian and Greek armies were mobilized. It was evident that Bulgaria would join Germany; and the attitude of Greece was very uncertain. The ruling royal family of Greece was affiliated with Germany<sup>2</sup> and was openly using in-

<sup>1</sup> "The taking of Warsaw had made a particularly strong impression on her." Ludendorff.

<sup>2</sup> The wife of King Constantine was a sister of the German Emperor.



fluence to make Greece take the side of Germany. The newly gathered Austro-German army appeared on the Danube opposite Belgrade, and the situation



No. 11. SERBIA OVERWHELMED.

(1) Main Austrian attacks. (2) Main German attacks. (3) Bulgarian invasion.  
(This map is diagrammatic only.)

for the Serbians was very grave. To assist the Serbians, and to strengthen the hand of the Entente Allies in the Balkans, a strong joint French and British military expedition was organized under the French General Sarrail. This army was landed at

Saloniki, disregarding a Greek protest (October 5, 1915), and the port of Saloniki was made a base for the maintenance of the Anglo-French army from the sea by the Allies.

General Sarrail's army was at once moved into the interior in the region of the Vardar, but it was not in time to help Serbia against a carefully planned concentration of Austro-Germans and Bulgarians, which had already been accomplished. It was plain that there had been an understanding in advance with the Bulgarians. General Maekensen was in command of the Austro-German army on the Danube, which opened a heavy bombardment on Belgrade. The Serbians were not able to prevent this force from crossing the Danube at several points, and the Austro-Germans were in possession of Belgrade on October 9 without much resistance.

In the next few days the whole Austro-German army was in Serbia, and the Serbians who had withdrawn south of Belgrade were also attacked by an invasion from Bulgaria. (Bulgaria declared war against Serbia October 14, 1915.) Against this combined attack the Serbians were unable to maintain themselves. Serbia was quickly overrun (Veles, October 20; Uskup, October 22; Kragujevatz, October 30; Nish, November 6). The remnants of the Serbian troops were scattered in retreat, and Serbia as a nation ceased to be a factor in the war.

General Sarrail's Anglo-French army from Saloniki had remained unable to assist the Serbians at this crisis. The combined forces of the Austro-Germans and Bulgarians were too strong, and this Anglo-French army was forced to withdraw to Saloniki. There extensive intrenchments had been prepared, and General Sarrail's army was placed in a strong position, where it could maintain itself and where it was sure of its supplies from the sea.

Although Saloniki was a refuge for the defeated Serbians, there was much disappointment at the failure of General Sarrail's army to assist them in the field. But it was not realized that good results were to follow the arrival of this army at Saloniki, which amply justified this use of the Anglo-French force. Placing a strong army in the north of Greece was very necessary at this time, when the fortunes of the Entente Allies were at such a low ebb. The presence of General Sarrail's army prevented the possibility of Greece being drawn into the combination against the Entente Allies. Without such a force to watch over the interests of the Allies the party of the Greek king might have proved influential enough to turn Greece over to Germany.

The presence of this army at Saloniki continued to be a helpful factor for the Allies throughout the war, although there was a great deal of unfavorable criticism on account of its enforced idleness. The chances for the Anglo-French army to engage in offensive operations were very limited because the Austro-Germans and Bulgarians were too strong in that sector, but, outside of its guardianship of Greece, the Saloniki army was always a threat against the Bulgarians and its presence always meant that the Entente Allies had maintained a hold upon that region. As the war went on the pressure upon this spot became more useful, and in the last months of the war the Anglo-French army was an influence that was strongly felt, as the allies of Germany disintegrated. There were many instances in the war where the armies of the Entente Allies were unwisely used, but sending the army to Saloniki was not one of these.

By the accession of Bulgaria and the conquest of Serbia the Central Powers had destroyed the barrier which separated them from Turkey. This was an all-important change in favor of the Teutons. It meant

that the siege of the Central Powers had been raised. Instead of being hemmed in, as at the beginning of 1915, the Central Powers had won free access to Turkey and the East. For Austria-Hungary in particular there had been a very great change for the better. The powerful German offensive of 1915 had removed the pressure of the Russian armies; the rich oil fields and food-producing areas in Galicia had been restored; and Serbia had been conquered. All this was a complete reversal of the military situation which existed for Austria at the beginning of 1915.

Another great advantage had been gained by Austria. After the Russian reverses, the Austrians were free to use more troops against the Italians without feeling their loss in other regions. As has been said, General Cadorna's Italian armies had not been able to make early gains against the Austrian defenses; neither had the Italian attacks, in the first months of General Cadorna's offensives, been dangerous enough to compel the Austrians to send first-line troops from Galicia. The Austrians had made the best use of the natural difficulties of the mountainous country which made their defenses so strong that the Austrians were able to maintain them with inferior troops. In both the Trentino and Isonzo operations General Cadorna found his tasks much harder than he had anticipated.

The Italian general was not able to make any progress toward taking Trent in the summer of 1915 when the Austrian first-line troops were occupied in the Galician campaign, and when the defense of the Trentino was correspondingly weak. In the Isonzo region it was the middle of the summer before the Italian attacks on Gorizia were well under way, and by that time the Russian defeats and the capture of Warsaw allowed the Austrians to bring first-line troops to the Italian front. Gorizia was greatly coveted by the Italians, and the Italian troops persisted in their attacks with heavy



losses. In August the Italians were completely checked, and they were obliged to pause to recruit and reorganize their troops.

In October the Italians renewed their attacks on the Isonzo front, and made another determined effort to capture Gorizia. These attacks were continued in November with great sacrifice of the Italian troops, but General Cadorna had been unable to make any important gains, and the Italian attacks ceased from exhaustion. After these last failures the Italians were obliged to give up the hopes of any further offensive operations, and they prepared for the winter in the mountains where cold and snow prevented active operations.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE WAR ON THE SEA, 1915

#### THE BLOCKADE. THE FIRST GERMAN SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN

ON the sea in 1915 the naval supremacy of the Entente Allies had remained unimpaired. In the winter of 1914-1915 there had been attempts to raid the British coasts by the fast cruisers and battle cruisers of the German Navy. Taking advantage of mist and darkness, squadrons of German warships occasionally managed to slip across the North Sea, and in some instances they had been able to bombard towns on the coast of Great Britain. These raids were all furtive, hurried dashes in the fog, and they were of no military value. Much capital was made by the Germans of the fact that actual bombardments of the British coast had taken place, but all the towns attacked had been peaceful towns on the coast, and all the damage inflicted had been the killing and wounding of civilians, including large numbers of women and children. The fact that these bombardments were all wantonly directed against helpless towns was so apparent that the Germans did not gain any result except the indignation that was aroused on account of the slaughter of women and children.

If the Germans had hoped to cause a panic they were disappointed, and this useless destruction only harmed Germany in the eyes of the world. One of these naval raids (January 24, 1915) was intercepted by a superior

force of British battle cruisers under Vice Admiral Beatty, after the fog had cleared in the early morning off the Dogger Bank. The German squadron consisted of three fast battle cruisers and an armored cruiser of less speed, the *Bluecher*. Admiral Beatty's force comprised five battle cruisers. The German squadron fled before this superior force, and there was a chase with long-range gunfire for about one hundred miles. The German battle cruisers made good their escape to the Heligoland base. The *Bluecher* was sunk after falling behind the rest of the German ships. This chase was interesting because it was the first encounter between two squadrons of battle cruisers. The ranges were too long for much of a test, although Admiral Beatty's flagship, the *Lion*, was disabled, and was towed to port by one of the other battle cruisers. (Dogger Bank Engagement, January 24, 1915.)

At the first of the year 1915 the question of the blockade became acute. As has been stated, the Allies did not declare a legal blockade of Germany at the beginning of the war, but merely served notice of war areas on the sea. On January 26, 1915, the German Government announced that all stocks of grain would be under Government control. Upon this declaration, the British Government announced that this action of the German Government had made foodstuffs contraband, and that transportation to Germany was prohibited. (February 2, 1915.) This change of policy on the part of the Allies caused great irritation among the neutrals, and there was a general protest against it. The German Government promptly retaliated (February 4, 1915), by declaring that after February 18 the waters around the British Isles would be a war area, that "all enemy ships found in that area will be destroyed, and that neutral vessels may be exposed to danger."

In this announcement, taking the former declaration of war areas by the British Government as a pretext for a precedent, the German Government gave the first notice that it intended to use the submarine in an illegal way to destroy commerce. As German ships were barred from the surface of the sea, this notice could only mean that the submarine was to be used to destroy shipping in the area proclaimed, and it also meant that proper means for saving the lives of passengers and crews would not be provided.

This step was deliberately taken by the German Government, and it should be realized by the reader that an underlying condition of the war was being created by Germany from this time, through her own act, which was fatal to her chances of winning the war. It is true that the illegal use of the submarine was afterwards destined to accomplish great results for Germany, yet all the time this policy was bringing about the greatest military result of all against Germany, the entrance of the United States into the war, which changed German victory into German defeat. Although nothing of this was apparent at first, indignation against the submarine policy soon became so strong that any irritation caused by the Allied blockading policy was comparatively forgotten. The Anglo-French declaration of "retaliatory measures" (March 1, 1915) did not fulfill the conditions of a legal blockade, and there would have been a great deal of feeling against it, if the acts of the submarines had not overshadowed any other question on the sea.

In the early part of the war, the submarines had destroyed a number of British warships, and they had given the British Naval Command a great deal of trouble in handling the British fleet to guard against their tactics, but their limitations when used against warships had prevented them from accomplishing tactical results that had any effect on the naval situation.



The British Navy, as explained, had been able to maintain communications across the British Channel with a negligible amount of losses. All this great volume of transportation of troops and supplies was going on without interruption. The Grand Fleet had contained the German fleet and controlled the North Sea. All over the world the effect of the Sea Power of the Entente Allies was felt, but there was an element in the German Navy, headed by Admiral Tirpitz, which had great confidence that the submarine used as a destroyer of commerce, and as a means of breaking the water-way communications of the Allies, would be a decisive factor in the war. Admiral Tirpitz's counsels prevailed, and the illegal submarine policy of Germany was the result.

In this German declaration of a war area from February 18, 1915, the fact that Germany had broken away from international law on the sea was so evident that the United States at once protested, and stated that Germany would be held accountable for infractions of the established rule to save the lives of passengers and crews. Holland, Italy, and other neutral nations also protested against this declaration, but Germany rejected these protests and persisted in the attempt to destroy all commerce in the area around Great Britain.

For this first submarine campaign there was no great number of U-boats available, such as Germany was able to use in the later submarine warfare, but the submarines began sinking merchant ships at a rate that soon proved the U-boat to be a most formidable commerce destroyer. The commanders of the submarines did not in this campaign throw aside all rules of humanity, as was the case later in the war, and although there were incidents that aroused a general antipathy to Germany among the neutral peoples there was nothing that aroused any dangerous

national resentment. The demand of the United States (April 5, 1915) for reparation for the sinking of the *William P. Frye* was promptly met by an agreement on the part of the German Government to compensate the owners of this American merchantman.

Suddenly there occurred the tragic sinking of the *Lusitania* (May 7, 1915) which changed entirely the world's view of the submarine question. The German Naval Command had decided with cold-blooded cynicism that it would be a good move to destroy one of the great British liners to terrify the British public. Before the sailing of the *Lusitania* from New York advertisements had been placed in New York papers warning passengers to keep off the ship, and near the coast of Ireland the great liner was sunk without warning by a German submarine. The ship sank so quickly that over a thousand of her passengers were lost. This cruel destruction of women and innocent children aroused indignation all over the world, and there was great anger in America. About one hundred of the victims had been Americans, including many women and children.

The American Government protested to the German Government against this outrage, and a diplomatic correspondence followed, in which the German Government misunderstood the temper of American people<sup>1</sup> and dragged the case out by equivocations and delays. At last the American Government sent a note which was practically an ultimatum, and, while this was being considered, the White Star liner *Arabic* was torpedoed with American passengers on board. The anger of the American public then became evident to the German officials, and the German Government informed the American Secretary of State that "Liners will not be sunk by submarines without warning, and

<sup>1</sup> "Peaceful money-making is the sole life interest of the American." Bernstorff, German Ambassador to Washington.

without insuring the safety of the lives of non-combatants, providing that the liners do not try to escape or offer resistance." (September 1, 1915.)

This marked the subsidence of U-boat warfare for a time.<sup>1</sup> The submarines had not been numerous, neither had the type of submarine been developed to the efficiency shown later in the war, and the results of this first U-boat campaign were not great enough to be a menace against the established control of the seas by the Entente Allies, which existed in 1915.

<sup>1</sup> "Practically complete cessation of all employment of submarines." Admiral Tirpitz, "My Memoirs."

## CHAPTER XVI

### EVENTS OF LAST PART OF YEAR 1915<sup>1</sup>

#### ALLIED OFFENSIVE ON THE WESTERN FRONT. EVACUATION OF GALLIPOLI. MESOPOTAMIA

AFTER the bitter disappointment for the Entente Allies in the failure of their spring offensives in 1915 the British and French peoples awoke to the realization that their preparations in the winter of 1914-1915 had been inadequate, especially in heavy guns and high explosives. Both Great Britain and France made efforts to correct this error. In France the production of heavy ordnance was at once increased. In Great Britain the revelation of weakness had been a great shock, because the British public had been optimistic in its confidence in Lord Kitchener. To find that the weakness of the British in artillery and munitions had been a grave defect<sup>2</sup> brought about a revulsion of feeling and there was a crisis in the Government, which demanded a remedy.

In consequence of this agitation a new office was created in the British Government, the Minister of Munitions (June 5, 1915). This was an important change, as most of the duties of the Master General of Ordnance were absorbed by the new office. The control of everything connected with munitions was thus taken away from the Minister of War. The energetic Lloyd George became the first incumbent of the new office. A Munition Act was framed which

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 7 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> "The Shell Scandal."



quickly became a law (July 2, 1915). By this legislation the industries of Great Britain were put on a war basis, and great authority was given to the new minister to control the industrial plants of the nation.

Although the British public was thoroughly aroused to the necessity of making greater efforts to win the war, the much needed conscription of Great Britain's man-power was still delayed, but there was enough pressure of public opinion to pass the "Bill for National Register" (July 15, 1915). This act provided for the registration of all male and female persons between fifteen and sixty-five. It was incomplete, because soldiers and sailors were not included, and it did not apply to Ireland except by special order of the Lord Lieutenant. Although this legislation was a far cry from the necessary conscription, it provided a basis for conscription, whenever the nation was ready to accept it, and it made the much needed classification of the elements in the population necessary to carry on the war industries. As a result, the British industries were from this time very efficient in providing the means to maintain the British forces, and they became a potent factor in winning the war. So marked was the ability shown by Lloyd George as Minister of Munitions that it became the step to his future leadership of Great Britain in the war.

The French had also realized that their program had been inadequate, and there was a similar reorganization of the industries of France, with increased efforts to remedy this lack of the munitions which were necessary to wage war on such a vast scale. These preparations of the Allies consumed the summer of 1915, and throughout those months it was impossible<sup>1</sup> for Great

<sup>1</sup> "I was sent for by Mr. Balfour on the 9th July, 1915, to be informed that the Army was terribly in need of guns." Sir Percy Scott, "Fifty Years in the Royal Navy."

Britain and France to undertake any offensive on the Western front that would divert German forces from the East.

The Russians were compelled to encounter the full offensive strength of the Central Allies, which could be used in Russia without danger of interruption.

In the early fall the British and French had greatly increased their munitions of all kinds, and in September the Allied commanders decided that they were again ready to attempt to break the German lines in the West. The British army had been increased to a million men. The French had about twice this number. This gave the Allies a decided superiority in numbers over the German forces which were defending the opposing intrenchments.

The plan of the Allies was to make a simultaneous attack on the two sides of the blunt salient in the German lines, of which the apex was in the vicinity of Noyon, to carry out the plan of General Joffre with sufficient equipment, this time, for a strong assault. Like the German attacks in the Russian offensive of 1915 on the north and on the south of the Warsaw salient, this double attack upon the Noyon salient was to be an attempt to eat into the two sides of the salient and to make it untenable. In the south the region chosen for the attack was the Champagne front, west of Verdun and the Argonne. The ground in this Champagne sector was considered favorable for the combined artillery and infantry attacks, and any penetration of the German lines in this region would have meant a serious menace to the German communications. In the north the attack was to be against the western side of the salient in the sector between Arras and La Bassée, with a similar threat in case the German line was bent back. This was to be a joint operation by the British and French troops. In the Champagne the French were to make the attack.

General Joffre's order for the attack in the Champagne was an acknowledgment that the new heavy artillery had been needed, and it also expressed confidence that the defect in munitions had been remedied. "Behind a storm of iron and fire, unloosed, thanks to the labor of the factories of France, where your comrades have worked day and night for you, you will go to the assault." There had been general bombardments along the Western front to screen the points of intended attack. This bombardment was increased in intensity against the two chosen points of assault in the days preceding September 25, which was to be the day of the double attack against the German salient.

This preparatory bombardment was the greatest that had been experienced on the Western front. In the two chosen areas the massed fire of artillery resembled the artillery attacks of the great German drive against the Russians. It absolutely destroyed the enemy's advanced positions in front of these guns, and to this extent it duplicated the destructive German bombardments of the Russian intrenchments, which had allowed the Austro-German armies to advance at will through the Russian positions. Yet it must be understood that there were two factors in this military situation which made it different from that on the Eastern front, and these two factors prevented the Entente Allies from winning a victory on the Western front.

The first and most important of these adverse elements was the condition that the Entente Allies did not possess in September, 1915, any decisive superiority in artillery on the Western front. The German Eastern offensive of the spring of 1915 had possessed the advantage of an enormous superiority in artillery over the Russians, which made defense against the German attacks impossible. The recent efforts of

France and Great Britain had greatly improved the situation, and the Entente Allies had an actual superiority in numbers on the fighting line, but the strength of artillery was practically equal, even after the Allied increase. Consequently there was no possibility of dominating the German artillery to the extent of destroying its defensive power.

The second element in the military situation, which was adverse to the Allies, was the increased strength of the prepared German defenses. This had not been appreciated by the Allies. After the German Command had decided to make the German offensive of 1915 in the East, and merely to hold the German lines in the West, all the defenses of the Western German battle-front line had been greatly strengthened. Successive intrenched positions had been devised, to supplement the German fighting line, extending back for miles behind the lines. Consequently the capture of the intrenchments of the German fighting line was only the beginning of the task for the Entente Allies. If these conditions are understood, the causes of the ensuing failure of the Allied attacks will be apparent.

After the intensive bombardment of the two points of attack culminating on the morning of September 25, the infantry was thrown forward to win the terrain which had been devastated by the artillery fire. In the Champagne<sup>1</sup> the French gained on September 25 an average of two miles on a front of about fifteen miles. These German positions had been destroyed, and the German guns were captured with them. Yet this advance of the French troops did not gain decisive results, such as had been won by the Germans against the Russians, as the Germans had other prepared strong positions.

In the Champagne attack only the advanced German positions had been won, and all through this French

<sup>1</sup> Battle of the Champagne.



assault the German artillery, which had not been silenced by the artillery of the Allies, had been taking a heavy toll from the French troops. In the night the French artillery was advanced, and the attack was renewed on the next day (September 26, 1919). In the fighting on this day gains were also made by the French, but they were not as great as on September 25. In fact, the advances of the French had become more difficult, and the defense of the Germans stronger. There was another attempt on the part of the French to advance on September 29, but their losses had grown out of all proportion to their gains, and in the first days of October it was decided that these losses could not be continued. The French casualties had been 120,000, and nothing had been accomplished that promised to force the Germans to retreat. It had become evident, even to the most optimistic among the French leaders, that again the forces prepared for the offensive were not strong enough to accomplish the desired result of dislocating the German armies.

The combined British and French attacks in the northern sectors of Arras and La Bassée met a similar fate. This has been known as the Battle of Loos. The same unfavorable factors that were present in the Champagne operated against the success of this attack, and it was doubtful if there ever was a chance of victory for the Allies.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these disadvantageous conditions, there was again trouble with the staff work of the British Command, like the mistakes of the Staff at Neuve Chapelle.<sup>2</sup> The result was that the available British forces were not used to the best advantage,

<sup>1</sup> "These objectives were not clearly defined till September, when we began our last combined attack to attain them and practically failed." "1914." Lord French.

<sup>2</sup> "One result of Loos was that criticism of our Staff work, which had been rife during the summer, rose to a pitch which demanded the attention of the nation." Buchan, "Nelson's History of the War."

and at one time in the battle the British Commander-in-Chief, General French, was obliged to ask for help from the coöperating French armies.<sup>1</sup>

After the failures in the Champagne and at Loos, the Allies abandoned attempts at the offensive, for the time being on the Western front, and settled down for another winter in the trenches. At the end of the year 1915, General French was recalled, and General Douglas Haig was given the command of the British armies in France.

In addition to these disappointments for the Allies on the Western front, the end of the year 1915 marked the ending of the unfortunate attempt on the Dardanelles. As the months passed, the situation had grown steadily worse for the British. On the other hand, the Turks were growing stronger from being better supplied with munitions, and the winter season was approaching. The British had not been able to make any gains of importance, and, when the losses of the expedition were published in December, it was evident that the undertaking was to be abandoned. There had been about 110,000 casualties,<sup>2</sup> and 90,000 had been admitted to hospital. The evacuation was accomplished in December and the early part of January, 1916.

Another British expedition was ending in disaster at the same time. In Mesopotamia a totally inadequate force had been pushed forward from India against Bagdad. This was an Anglo-Indian expedition that never was 20,000 strong, and it is hard to see how any such force could have been relied upon to win an important object. In November this expedition was

<sup>1</sup> "On representing this to General Joffre, he was kind enough to ask the commander of the northern group of the French armies to render me assistance. . . . This relief commenced upon the 30th September, and completed on the two following nights." General French's dispatch.

<sup>2</sup> Dardanelles losses (Sir Percy Scott): killed 23,035; wounded 78,008; missing 10,567; sick 90,000. Tonnage of ships lost 79,600.

advancing along the Tigris commanded by General Townshend. At Ctesiphon the British met strong resistance from the Turks (November 22). At first the British won some success, but in the following days General Townshend was defeated, and he was compelled to retreat down the Tigris to Kut-el-Amara, where his army was shut in and besieged. It proved impossible to rescue this isolated force, and it was finally obliged to surrender to the Turks (April 28, 1916).

The failure of this Bagdad attempt was not of any great military importance, but it had a bad effect on British prestige in the East. The fact that the Turks had been able to defeat an Anglo-Indian expedition produced unrest and helped the German agents to work upon the native populations in the East. This was especially noticeable in Persia.

#### MAP NO. 7. ATTEMPTED OFFENSIVES OF THE ALLIES, 1915

##### ON THE WESTERN FRONT

(This map is diagrammatic only)

##### *Spring of 1915.*

- ① Battle of Neuve Chapelle (March, 1915).
- ② Second Battle of Ypres (April-May, 1915) resulting in German counter offensive ③.
- ③ Battle of Festubert, and ④ Battle of the Artois, joint Allied attack (May, 1915).

##### *Fall of 1915.*

Combined attempt to force the Noyon salient (September, 1915).

- ⑤ Battle of the Champagne, French attack.
- ⑥ Battle of Loos, British and French attacks.

None of these Allied offensives of 1915 won results of importance.

— Battle line at the end of 1915.





## CHAPTER XVII

### MILITARY SITUATION AT THE FIRST OF THE YEAR, 1916<sup>1</sup>

#### MITTEL EUROPA. GERMAN PLAN FOR A GREAT OFFENSIVE ON THE WESTERN FRONT

THE end of 1915 had marked a year of reverses for the Entente Allies, and the Central Powers had been uniformly successful in gaining their military objectives. The Allies had not won success in any of their offensives. The Dardanelles expedition, the offensives on the Western front, the attempts of the Russians, and the Italian efforts in the war, were all failures. The Germans had been able to carry out their plan of holding the Allied armies in the West while they won the great campaign against the Russians. This had resulted in the entrance of Bulgaria on the side of Germany and the conquest of Serbia.

As will be seen on the map, the siege of the Teutonic allies had been raised in the East, and the "Bridge to the East" had been won by Germany. The newly won strip of territory connected the Central Powers with Turkey and the East.<sup>2</sup> One of the great ambitions of Germany seemed on the point of being realized, the scheme of "Mittel Europa." This at once became one of the great issues of the war, and the conditions that had arisen should be stated.

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 12 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> "The railway running to Constantinople was opened on January 16 (1915)." "Ludendorff's Own Story."



The Teutonic desire to control the Near East was only a modern form of one of the oldest ambitions in the world, a legacy of the ancient empires and of the Middle Ages, the dream of Napoleon. Seizure of this source of power by some rival had long been the dread of England. To combat imagined attempts at such control on the part of Russia was Great Britain's self-imposed task for three generations.

It was the union of Germany and Turkey that made the Teutonic control of the passage to the East a serious matter for the whole commercial world. No longer was it a question of the great undeveloped Slavic empire seeking an outlet to the sea; it was a new military and trade weapon already firmly in the grasp of the most efficient military power ever developed. The Teutons dominated the whole Balkan peninsula, as well as the Dardanelles; Serbia had been overrun. The consolidation of the great strip of territory from Germany, through Austria-Hungary, the Balkan States, and Asia Minor, to the East was an accomplished fact from a military point of view.

Teutonic control of these territories implied ownership of long lines of land transportation and domination of commerce through them. What danger was there for the rest of the commercial world in this situation, with so great a power ready to use this control to its own advantage? Even under the efficient control of Germany could artificial conditions of land transportation compete with the great natural lanes of the sea? Never in history had this proved possible, yet here were all the elements of the most efficient machinery ever devised to build up such a structure. The foundation of this Germanic edifice was the Bagdad Railroad, originally projected as a line from the Levant to the Persian Gulf, enlarged into the railway systems reaching from Hamburg on the North Sea to the Euphrates and Tigris valleys in Asia Minor.

A paper published by Admiral Mahan in 1902 was a most interesting discussion of the military and commercial value of this railroad as originally planned. The following is the keynote of his argument: "The perennial conflict between land and water transport, between natural and artificial conditions, in which victory is likely to rest, as heretofore, with nature's own highway, the seas."

Admiral Mahan sums up the merits of the railway in words that are well worthy of study in relation to the situation at the end of 1915, and in relation to any situation which may arise in the future.

"This new line will have over the one now existing the advantage which rail travel always has over that by water, of greater specific rapidity. It will, therefore, serve particularly for the transport of passengers, mails, and lighter freights. On the other hand, for bulk of transport, meaning thereby not merely articles singly of great weight or size, but the aggregate amounts of freight that can be carried in a given time, water will always possess an immense and irreversible advantage over land transport for equal distances. A water route is, as it were, a road with numberless tracks. For these reasons, and on account of the first cost of construction, water transport has a lasting comparative cheapness, which, so far as can be foreseen, will secure to it forever a commercial superiority over that by land. It is also, for large quantities, much more rapid; for, though a train can carry its proper load faster than a vessel can, the closely restricted number of trains that can proceed at once, as compared to the numerous vessels, enables the latter in a given time, practically simultaneously, to deliver a bulk of material utterly beyond the power of the road."

These wise conclusions were drawn from the first project of the railway from the Levant to the Persian Gulf, — and these fixed conditions, with which a rail-

way has to contend, are multiplied by length. So it must be kept in mind that even German efficiency had a hard problem to solve in the railroad from Berlin to the East.

A study of the map will show that the proper economic uses of these railway systems are the normal functions of any railroads, to distribute goods brought by water, to deliver goods for shipment by water, and to connect neighboring countries. Under such natural commercial conditions, as pointed out by Admiral Mahan, the great bulk of freight shipped for long distances would not use the railways but, no matter what concessions might be made in rates, would be carried over the seas. Railways can never compete with water-ways.

So the conclusion is obvious that, under natural conditions, even though these railways might be under Teutonic control, they would be of great value to the countries through which they run; but that, while of great advantage to German trade, they could not be a source of undue power to Germany. Such power, which Germany unquestionably sought, could therefore only be founded on artificial conditions.

Was there, then, any dangerous power in the conditions which had been created by Germany? That there was a danger would only be denied by one who was blind to German methods and German ambitions. This should be stated as baldly as possible. Germany aimed to establish such control over these regions that all commercial gains should be hers, and the other nations should be excluded. The ruthlessness and tenacity of purpose of Germany had been so plainly shown that it was no wonder Germanic control of "Mittel Europa" was widely held to be the greatest menace of the war.

But, as is often the case, this dread was exaggerated. In fact, it had been allowed to grow out of all propor-

tion to the other great interests at stake in this war. There were counteracting forces that tended to make the situation normal. There had been so much fear of Germanic control of the passage to the East that the hardships for Germany and her allies of such enforced conditions had not been considered.

Germany's commerce would suffer from this restricted traffic. To hold their own, even with all possible favoritism shown to them, the German merchants must make proper use of the water-ways or submit to a ruinous tax on their trade. The same was true of Germany's friends and allies,—and this leads at once to natural conditions of commerce.

With German merchants and the merchants of her friendly States the worst sufferers, how was it possible to attempt to confine traffic to the railways? Yet such must be the basis of any abnormal German domination in the East. Consequently, leaving all the other nations out of consideration, the interests of Germany and her allies were against the misuse of control that had been so widely considered the dangerous threat in the conditions.

There was another restraint on this much-feared Teutonic influence. To be maintained at all, such a central control must be that of nations closely united and unanimous in purpose. Where could this be found in these regions? With all the diversities of interest, with the antagonisms of races and religions, was it possible that Germany had built a harmonious machine that had accomplished what has never been done in history,—diverted the bulk of commerce from the sea to the land?

Studying the question in this way from conditions that had prevailed throughout all history, we realize that this issue should not have been magnified and allowed to cloud our minds. The military results secured by Germany should not have been under-



estimated, but neither should they have been misunderstood and exaggerated. These military results were very great. Not only had Hindenburg and his lieutenants raised the siege of the Central Powers, but they had conquered great areas of territory, which joined the Teutonic nations and Turkey and insured much needed supplies. These were very serious and far-reaching reverses for the Entente Allies, but the unfavorable situation was a military situation, and it should not have been distorted into anything worse. The menace of a German-controlled Mittel Europa was exaggerated.

The defeats of the Entente Allies had brought about complete changes in the military rulers of the different nations. The three military dictators of France, Great Britain, and Russia had not survived the failure of the Allies to make preparations for 1915 on a scale to cope with the preparations of Germany. In England Lord Kitchener had been shorn of most of his powers. In addition to the creation of the post of Minister of Munitions, Lord Derby had been put in charge of the recruiting, and Sir William Robinson was British Chief of Staff. Sir Douglas Haig had replaced General French as Commander-in-Chief of the British armies in France. General Joffre was still in command of the French armies, but he was not paramount as before, and he was soon to relinquish personal direction of the French troops. In Russia the Grand Duke Nicholas had been superseded, and had been sent to command in the Caucasus. The great war had outgrown the efforts of its early leaders, however valuable their services had been at the outset.

The Allied reverses had also awakened the nations of the Entente Allies to the urgent necessity for larger armies and an increased production of artillery and munitions. As a result of this hard-learned lesson, great preparations were being made for the campaign

of 1916. The delay in enacting conscription in Great Britain had been unfortunate, and the British armies were disappointing in numbers, but the Military Service Bill was introduced at the first of the year 1916 (January 5, 1916). This insured a greatly increased British army in 1916, but the increase would not be available for an offensive early in the year.

After the British industries had been organized by Lloyd George, they continued to do wonderful work in providing munitions and supplies of all kinds. The efficient work of Great Britain in this vast undertaking was beyond praise. Thanks to the Allied control of the seas, great quantities of supplies of all kinds were also being drawn from America. At the same time the French were increasing their production of heavy guns and munitions, which they were destined to need in the first German campaign of 1916, directed against Verdun.

This German attack on Verdun was planned as an attempt to use against the French in 1916 the methods which had been so successful against the Russians in 1915. The German Chief of Staff, Falkenhayn, planned to use the artillery of the Dunajec breakthrough in a renewed attempt to carry out the war plan of 1914, and win the war on the Western front. With the favorable military situation in the East that had been won by the Central Powers, it was possible for Germany to reverse the military policy of 1915, and in the campaign of 1916 to hold fast the great gains the Germans had secured in the East, but to make a strong offensive in the West against the French.

Accordingly, as stated by Ludendorff, definite plans were made for the Austrians to attack the Italians, and for the German Staff "to attempt an offensive to bring about a decision" through the Verdun assault.

Contrary to the general Allied opinion at the time,

Germany still had great strength in military resources, and the Germans were perfectly well able to prepare another heavy blow against the Allies. Maintaining the enormous armies on both fronts had been a great drain on Germany, but at the beginning of 1916 nothing had occurred to weaken the German military power. The Germans knew that there was no possibility of a military diversion in the East. The battered Russian armies could not take the offensive at the first of the year. The Italians were being safely held and were to be attacked in the spring of 1916 by the Austrians. There was no military force in any other region strong enough to compel German troops to be sent away from the West front, and thus interrupt the proposed new drive against France. The Germans also knew, from the tests of the Allied offensive powers in the failures of Loos and the Champagne, that the Allies would not be able to deliver a counter offensive in the West early in 1916.

Consequently in the winter of 1915-1916 the German military efforts were concentrated upon preparations for a great offensive, to use masses of artillery and infantry as in the Russian campaign, in an attempt to break through the French line at Verdun. It was planned to make this attack early in the year 1916, before the Allies could prepare for a spring campaign. As was the case in 1915, the Allies did not look for any offensive that would be different from those in the past on the Western front, and the Germans were able to concentrate great masses of men and guns against the Verdun salient ahead of all calculations of the Allies, — a dangerous military situation for the beginning of 1916, especially in view of the fact that, in contrast to the indirect strategy of 1914, Falkenhayn had stated his intention to attack at the place where the French must stand and subject their armies to the destructive effects of the German assaults.

## MAP NO. 12. THE SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF 1916

### MITTEL EUROPA

(This map is diagrammatic only)

Shaded area controlled by the Central Powers.

— Battle fronts.      •••• Neutral frontiers.

The Allies had failed in their attempted offensives in 1915, and the Central Powers were no longer besieged. Through the accession of Bulgaria and conquest of Serbia, they had established the "Mittel Europa" of the Pan-Germans.

The railways indicated on the map show the projected system of the "Pan-Germanic Plan of 1911," the railroad connecting Hamburg, Berlin, Constantinople, and Bagdad with the Persian Gulf, and the branches to Saloniki and Trieste. It also shows the proposed cross-line from Riga to Antwerp and Calais. This annexationist scheme also comprised a great Germanic Confederation, which was to include Poland and the Baltic provinces of Esthonia, Livonia, and Courland — and also a strip of France east of a line from the mouth of the Somme to Belfort. (The boundaries of the territory to be annexed are indicated on this map by the lines of small crosses.)

For the first part of 1916 the Entente Allies were unable to plan any offensives, except in the Caucasus, as the new British armies would not be ready, and the Russian armies had been badly shattered in 1915.

The Central Powers planned two offensives: (A) A German attempt to break through at Verdun; (B) An Austrian offensive against Italy.



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## CHAPTER XVIII

### GERMAN OFFENSIVE OF 1916 AGAINST VERDUN<sup>1</sup>

VERDUN had been chosen by the German Staff as the point of assault on the Western front because the capture and retention of St. Mihiel by the Germans had made the Verdun positions in the Allied battle line an exposed salient. This salient was not much over twenty miles wide at the base. It had the Meuse River behind it, and consequently it was a vulnerable point for attack by a great concentration of forces. The reader should understand at the outset that Verdun was not a fortress in the old meaning of the word, in 1916. Before the war Verdun had been one of the great fortresses of France, which had been so much relied upon by the French strategists, but it had lost its existence as a formal fortress in 1914.

Verdun had been a ring fortress of the type deemed a strong point in support of armies in position. It had consisted of an *enceinte* and forts surrounding it, with concrete and steel emplacements for the guns, which had been considered proof against any bombardment. In 1914, after the fate of Liège and Namur had shown the weakness of such fortresses, General Sarrail had converted the region of Verdun into a series of intrenchments which were four or five miles beyond the lines of the encircling forts. The commanding locations of the forts had also become systems of intrenchments, with underground tunnels

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 13 at the end of Chapter 20.



and earthworks, with the guns placed about in these intrenchments, instead of being grouped in the old way.

In the winter of 1915-1916 the German preparations for the attack on the Verdun sector had been made in the most thorough manner. The leadership of the Crown Prince was to give it prestige, and chosen troops had been gathered in this region. Railways and roads for transportation had been devised. From the East the Germans had brought large numbers of the heavy guns which had defeated the Russians,<sup>1</sup> and a great concentration of artillery had been prepared to advance in successive attacks.

There is no question of the fact that the extent of these German preparations had not been discovered by the French Command. Fortunately before this crisis the French Staff had realized that the Verdun salient might easily be isolated from railway communications, and a motor system had been planned by which 250,000 troops, and supplies of all kinds, could be moved into the Verdun defenses. This was a precaution taken to avoid an obvious danger. It was not devised in reference to the German offensive of 1916, but it was a great factor in defeating the German drive.

The French Command at this time did not expect any attack on the Verdun sector that would be different from operations in the past, although it is known that German activity had been noticed in this region, and the possibility of attacks on Verdun had been reported. That this great danger was not measured by the French is evident from the condition of the French defenses. Verdun had been in a quiet sector, and no new lines of trenches had been constructed to supplement the original intrenchments of General Sarrail. These old

<sup>1</sup> "... heavy artillery had to be transferred from the German Eastern front to the West." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

defenses had also been neglected, and they were not in good condition. Consequently it is true that the great German attack was a surprise, in the sense that it was a massed attack of a strength that had never been suspected, — and against which no adequate preparations had been made.

To avoid giving notice of their intentions, the Germans did not plan any long preparatory bombardment, and this contributed to the surprise. The Germans relied upon the sudden blast of the great concentration of artillery to destroy the French defenses. This mass of artillery had been gathered, without being estimated by the aviators,<sup>1</sup> in the region due north of Verdun between the Meuse River and the Woëvre. On the morning of February 21 the great German bombardment began. It was of an intensity never before experienced, even in the Russian campaign of 1915, and in a short time the French advanced defenses were destroyed.

The defenders of these French positions had been Territorial troops, but no soldiers in the world could have shown greater tenacity and courage. Although their intrenchments had been destroyed, they clung to every foot of ground as long as possible. Their losses were heavy, almost to the point of annihilation in the attacks that followed in the succeeding days. At first the German losses were comparatively light, as the infantry was only advanced after the artillery had accomplished its work of destruction. Then the Germans found that it was necessary to use their infantry in attacks upon the obstinately defending French troops. The German artillery could not be advanced fast enough.<sup>2</sup> The weather was very bad,

<sup>1</sup> "An extraordinary amount of artillery of the largest calibre." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

<sup>2</sup> "... our artillery, which had been unable to follow fast enough over the still barely passable roads." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

with snow and cold. The French artillery was replying, and the losses of the Germans began also to be heavy.

It is true that the French were being steadily forced back until February 26, and the Germans had penetrated about four miles to the Douaumont Plateau, which had been one of the old encircling forts, but the German advance was no longer the overwhelming force of successive advances of artillery. The German infantry had become involved in desperate fighting with the French troops. The wonderful resistance shown by the French is beyond all praise. The defending troops were a forlorn hope, fighting and dying to delay the German advance as long as possible. There were even French counter attacks, notably at Fort Douaumont on February 26.

This desperate resolve to oppose the Germans to the last was the main defense of Verdun. "They shall not pass" was not a mere cry; it was the spirit that could not be broken. There had been indecision on the part of the French Command, in the first days of the German attacks, as to the advisability of defending Verdun, but, in view of the gallant resistance of the French troops and the moral effect upon the French nation, it was decided to persevere in the defense. From this time on for many weeks the desperate Battle of Verdun was the task of the French Army with the aroused French nation behind it. Verdun had become a name for the prestige of France, and as such it was defended.<sup>1</sup>

Enormous losses were heroically borne, while the new defenses were being prepared and artillery brought into position to equal the German concentration against Verdun.<sup>2</sup> Miracles were accomplished by the French

<sup>1</sup> "The desperate struggle for the possession of Verdun had invested the place with a moral and political importance out of all proportion to its military value." Sir Douglas Haig. Dispatch.

<sup>2</sup> "Meanwhile the enemy with astonishing rapidity brought a number of powerful batteries of artillery into position. . . ." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

in motor transportation. Heavy naval guns were taken from the French warships and brought to this sector. At last an equality of artillery was established, and the battle became equal. General Pétain had been placed in command of the French defense, and against great odds he was able to overcome the disadvantages of the unexpected German strength of attack.

In the meantime the Germans had continued to make increased gains of terrain in the Verdun region. After the first German onrush north of Verdun had been checked in the last days of February, the Germans at the beginning of March began to eat into the French lines on each side of the ground they had gained in the center. These attacks were continued for weeks with very heavy losses for both sides. The French were growing stronger in artillery, and the fighting had assumed the character of most of the battles on the Western front, with small gains for the Germans at the cost of great losses. West of the Meuse River the Germans had advanced for about the same distance that they had gained on the east of the river (Le Mort Homme, Hill 304, etc., March, April, and May). Southeast of Douaumont there was even a more prolonged struggle for the position of Fort Vaux (March 9 to June).

All this time, in the successive stages of the battle, the Germans had become more and more involved in offensive operations of a nature that made it necessary for their command to sacrifice great numbers of men. This costly infantry fighting had not been any part of the original plans of the German General Staff,<sup>1</sup> but these assaults had been continued because the German Command had been led on by the con-

<sup>1</sup> "Our precise problem is how to inflict heavy damages on the enemy at critical points at relatively small cost to ourselves." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.



viction that increased efforts would win its objective. Although the desperate defense of the French had delayed the impetus of the drive until the French were able to offer a strong resistance in artillery, throughout all the fighting the Germans continued to gain some ground, and these gains encouraged the German Staff in the vain hope that the French resistance would collapse in the end.

There was an added spur for the German Staff to make every effort to win at Verdun. The German people had been assured that this time victory was in their grasp. The moral effect of a victory was needed by the German Government, and the moral effect of a German defeat was dreaded. Consequently the Battle of Verdun was prolonged for months. Great as the French losses had been in the first weeks of the struggle, the scale was balanced by the enormous wastage of troops incurred by the German Staff in thus prolonging the contest, urged on by the vain hope of ultimate victory. Just as in France the name of Verdun had meant the prestige of the French nation, so in Germany the waning prestige of the German Great General Staff had been staked on a victory at Verdun. In the long months of fighting the obstinate defense of the French prevailed, and the great offensive of the Germans failed to win its objective.<sup>1</sup> The Great General Staff had lost its stake, and the loss meant the downfall of its chief, Falkenhayn, just as the defeat on the Marne brought about the retirement of the Moltke of 1914.

<sup>1</sup> "Why should we persevere with an offensive which exacted such frightful sacrifices and, as was already obvious, had no prospects of success?" Hindenburg, "Out of My Life."

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE FIRST HALF OF 1916<sup>1</sup>

#### THE RENEWED RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE. CHANGE IN THE MILITARY SITUATION

WHILE Germany's great efforts were being put forth in the Verdun offensive at the first of the year 1916, there was no possibility of a counter offensive on the part of the Entente Allies that would divert the forces of the Central Powers to other fields. The new British armies were not prepared for active operations in the spring of 1916. In fact it was not until July that the Entente Allies were able to make any attack on the Western front that was strong enough to draw German troops away from Verdun. As a matter of course the Russians, after their reverses of 1915, were unable to take the offensive early in the year 1916. At this time the Allies were not strong enough in the Balkans to undertake any operations with the army of General Sarrail, which was kept in position at Saloniki. The Italians had been stopped from making any gains by the reinforcement of Austrian troops which had been sent to the Italian front in the fall of 1915, and the Austrians were preparing for an offensive.

In only one region was there an aggressive campaign on the part of the Entente Allies at this time. The Grand Duke Nicholas had been sent to command in the Caucasus, after he had been removed from the

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 14 at the end of Chapter 21.

command of the defeated Russian armies in the campaign of 1915. In the Caucasus the Grand Duke had shown great energy in organizing a campaign against the Turks, and he began active operations early in 1916. The Turks in this region were ill-organized, and the Russian troops won successes against them from the first. Erzeroum was captured on February 14. This stronghold had been fought for in former wars between the Turks and the Russians, and its capture had a great moral effect on the Turks. This was increased by the Russian conquest of Turkish Armenia which followed, and Trebizond was captured April 18.

These victories undoubtedly had a moral effect in Turkey, but Turkey was at this time outside the theater of important events. The defeat of the British attempt on the Dardanelles had removed the only danger that threatened to impair the usefulness of the Turks to Germany. Events in Asia Minor might harm the Turks, but they could not have much effect on the German efforts in the great centers of the conflict.

On the other hand, the release of strong Austrian forces from the southeast for use against Italy was having a very bad effect on the Italian military situation, and in the spring of 1916 the Austrians began their prepared offensive from the Trentino, which imperiled the Italian armies and threatened the Venetian plain. Heavy artillery had been brought up against the Italian lines in the Trentino. On May 14 there was a sudden bombardment, which was very destructive, and the Austrian infantry attacked on the fifteenth, making gains at once in the sector north of the Asiago plateau.

In ten days the Austrians had pushed across the Italian frontier, inflicting heavy losses in men and guns. By the end of May this invasion had become

serious, as the Austrians had advanced upon Arsiero and Asiago. They were well within the mountains on the Italian side of the frontier and they were approaching the slopes of the Venetian plains. This meant that the Austrians also threatened the communications of the Italian armies on the Isonzo. These reverses caused great excitement in Italy. The Cabinet fell, and even the enthusiasm for Cadorna was endangered by his failure to stop the Austrian invasion. In the early days of June the situation of the Italian armies was critical.

At this crisis came the sudden Russian attacks in Volhynia and Galicia which altered the whole military situation.<sup>1</sup> The unexpected had happened, and the Russians had managed to recover from their defeats in time to make the first offensive against the Central Powers in 1916. At once the Russians accomplished for the Italians what the entrance of Italy, and the Italian efforts in 1915, had failed to accomplish for Russia.<sup>2</sup> The pressure against the Italians was relaxed, as it was necessary to send troops from the Italian front back to the southeast, where the Austrian armies were greatly outnumbered by the newly strengthened Russian armies.<sup>3</sup>

Under the skilful direction of Alexief wonders had been accomplished with the Russian armies in the winter of 1915-1916. At the close of 1915 the Russian troops were badly disorganized. They had lost guns and supplies. The losses in men could be replaced, as Russia had plenty of man-power to draw

<sup>1</sup> "The blow fell like a bolt from the blue in Galicia on the 4th of June." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

<sup>2</sup> "By the end of May the pressure of the enemy on the Italian front had assumed such serious proportions that the Russian campaign was opened early in June, and the brilliant successes gained by our Allies against the Austrians at once caused a movement of German troops from the Western to the Eastern front." Sir Douglas Haig's dispatch.

<sup>3</sup> "Austria gradually broke off the Italian offensive, and sent troops to the Eastern front." Ludendorff.



upon for recruits, but the huge losses in guns, munitions, and supplies of all kinds could not be replaced. From the first the lack of equipment had been the great weakness of Russia, and the wastage in 1915 had greatly increased this handicap. The Russians had suffered so great losses in officers that most of their experienced officers were gone. In spite of optimistic reports only the skeletons of the Russian armies had escaped from the shattering attacks of the Germans in 1915. But their ranks had been filled, and there was enough of the steadfast spirit of the Russian nation left for one more effort. That effort was made most gallantly in 1916.

Remarkable as was this recovery of the Russians, the superiority of their armies in the southeastern front, in June, 1916, was mainly due to the over-confidence of the Central Powers, which had allowed the Austrian armies opposing the Russians to be greatly weakened. The feeble attacks made by the Russians in the winter, after the great Austro-German offensive had ceased, were thought to be the measure for months of the Russian powers of offensive. Concerning this situation Ludendorff wrote: "In any case, we were under the impression that the successful repulse of the Russian winter offensive had made Austria-Hungary safe." In this fancied security the General Staffs of Austria-Hungary and Germany had made their respective plans for the Italian and Verdun offensives, and had weakened the southeastern front.

No attempt was made by the Russians against the Germans in the north, but on the whole front from the Pripet marshes to Rumania their armies suddenly attacked the Austrians. General Brusiloff had been given the command of this group of armies in the southeast. On June 4 there was a bombardment along the front. Immediately following, there was a

general advance by the Russians.<sup>1</sup> There were no special concentrations against the Austrian positions. The Russian Command made the attack along the front, trusting to the surprise and to the numerical superiority which the over-confident Austrians had allowed the Russians to establish. The Russians began to gain at once, and on some sectors of the fighting line the Austrians were badly routed.

The most dangerous thrust was in Volhynia against the army of the Austrian Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, where the Russians penetrated the Austrian lines west of Rovno, and the Archduke's army broke and fled toward Kovel. Dubno and Lutsk were taken, and the Russians advanced nearly fifty miles on a wide front. On the southern end of the long battle line another Austrian army (Pflanzer) had been put to flight. Czernowitz had been captured June 17, and practically all of Bukowina had been won. The Austrians were driven toward Stanislau. By the end of June an Austrian collapse appeared imminent.<sup>2</sup>

So evident was the seriousness of the situation, that Hindenburg had quickly begun to send German troops to reinforce the Austrians. The main point of danger was in the region of Kovel, where the Archduke's army had been broken and where there was danger of opening a gap between the Austrians and the German armies in the north. Using the military railroads, German troops were hurried to the Austrians. These reinforcements were under the command of Ludendorff, and they were handled with great skill. General Linsingen organized German counter attacks from the north in the Kovel sector. These

<sup>1</sup> "After a relatively short artillery preparation they had got up from their trenches and simply marched forward." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

<sup>2</sup> "... a result of the loss by our allies of far more than two hundred thousand men in three days." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

checked the Russian advance in that region, and Kovel was not captured by the Russians. But they retained most of their gains, and they were preparing for a new advance in the first days of July.

The middle of the year 1916 thus found a striking change in the military situation in favor of the Entente Allies. "The face of the war had changed completely."<sup>1</sup> The Battle of Verdun was being continued; but this could no longer be called a real offensive, and it was losing the confidence of the German people. In fact, the offensive had suddenly passed to the Allies. Germany was again compelled to send help to the East. The Austrians were now inferior to the Italians on the Italian front, and the Italians were about to resume the offensive. The Russians were preparing to follow up their successes with new attacks in July. July also marked the time when the new British armies were ready for their long-prepared offensive, the Battle of the Somme.

With all these apparently favorable elements for the Entente Allies in the military situation, it is no wonder that Allied sentiment had changed from despondency to hopeful confidence, and the belief became general that the last half of the year was to bring victory. The reappearance of the Russian armies in the field had been so dramatic and well timed that the Russians were thought unbeatable. That their effort must be limited by their scanty supplies was not appreciated, and it was not understood at the time that their superiority in the southeast was the result of weakened Austrian armies, which were at once to be reinforced by the Germans. It was also not realized that for the Russians to try to obtain a decision, without adequate artillery and supplies, would entail awful losses. Herein lay the weakness that was often concealed by the Russian contempt for losses in battle.

<sup>1</sup> Ludendorff.

With the handicap of poor weapons, even their victories were more costly to them than to their enemy. Human nature could not endure such sacrifices, and, as a result, the Russian military strength was doomed to collapse, but its successful efforts had certainly saved the Entente Allies in the first half of 1916.



## CHAPTER XX

EVENTS OF THE SECOND HALF OF 1916<sup>1</sup>

## THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

At last, on July 1, 1916, the new British armies were declared ready for an offensive, and on that day began the series of attacks on the German positions which became known as the Battle of the Somme. This offensive was planned as a joint drive by the British and French, north and south of the Somme, against the western line of the Noyon salient. This salient was the broad blunt angle in the German lines which the Entente Allies had tried to break at two points, in the Champagne and at Loos, in the preceding fall. In the July, 1916, offensive there was only one point of assault. The British and French were to advance side by side on adjacent sectors. The heaviest attack was to be made by the British, but, in spite of the drain at Verdun, the French were able to use strong forces.

The basis for the plan of this attack was the conviction that the Entente Allies had established so great a superiority that they would be able to push through the German lines at any chosen point.<sup>2</sup> It is hard to understand the confidence of the Allies at the beginning of this offensive, but there is no question of the fact that it existed. The main reason for it was the abundance of guns and munitions, which the

Allies at last possessed in such great quantities that the German artillery was thought to be outclassed. The Allies also possessed a superiority in numbers greater than ever before in the war, as the British armies had been much increased and the French had strained every resource in man-power to recruit their troops.

It was felt in Great Britain that the British troops had at times been on the point of winning victories, and that these chances had been lost through ill luck or mistakes of their Staff. This had grown into the firm belief that, with a changed command, superior forces, and long, careful preparation, the British forces were sure to break through. British cavalry was brought up behind the lines, to ride through the expected gaps and to follow up the expected victory. Seldom before a battle has there been more confidence in the result.

Before the battle the new artillery was used in a bombardment "from the 24th June to 1st July",<sup>1</sup> which was expected to destroy the German positions, and early on the morning of July 1 the first assault was made, the British advancing on a front of about twenty miles. The French front was south of the British along the Somme and south of the river, and was about one half as wide. The French troops were again under General Foch. Perhaps because an offensive from the French was not expected, the French attacks were successful and they penetrated the German positions on their front, though there was nothing gained that threatened to break the German lines. The French losses were not excessive on this day.

The great British attack met with much stronger resistance, especially in the northern part of the sector. It was found that the British artillery had not suc-

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 13 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> ". . . an attempt to break through on a large scale." Ludendorff.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Douglas Haig, Dispatch.

ceeded in destroying the German positions, and the British infantry was met by machine-gun fire and by accurately placed shells from the German artillery. The British losses were fearful, so great in the northern region of the Ancre that it was impossible to stand up against them, and no gains of any account were made on the northern half of the British front. On the southern sector the British made gains of one to two miles on a front of about seven miles.

These gains of the German first positions on a part of the British front had cost the British more than fifty thousand casualties in the first day's action, and this one day decided the actual results of the Battle of the Somme, so far as concerned breaking through the German lines of battle. The futility of any such attack was so evident that the battle was not renewed on any similar scale in the ensuing operations. The British losses had been prohibitive. The offensive was persevered in, but it was continued by preparations to wear away the German positions,<sup>1</sup> by steady, hard pounding with artillery, and advances by infantry that won German positions piecemeal, the so-called tactics of "limited objectives."<sup>2</sup>

This change of tactics, and the heavy losses which had caused it, had not been appreciated by the British public. The first day's gain looked well on the map and day by day new gains were reported. As the weeks went by and these gains of terrain were still made, there was always the expectation that the point would

<sup>1</sup> "In view of the general situation at the end of the first day's operations, I decided that the best course was to press forward . . . and to limit the offensive on our left for the present to a slow and methodical advance." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>2</sup> "If by the evening of the second day of the battle it was quite certain that the break-through planned by the English and French would not succeed, after the first week G. H. Q. knew with equal certainty that the enemy would also fail to reach his objective in the nibbling tactics to which he had been compelled to resort after the miscarriage of the break-through." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

be reached when the German line would give way. Consequently the confidence of the British public was maintained for months, and the Battle of the Somme was regarded as a victorious advance, which proved that at last the Allies had established a superiority over the Germans, and that this superiority was destined to win the war on the Western front. The British Command had undoubtedly received a great setback in its hopes of a complete victory, but it is evident that, as the operations progressed with continued gains, there was always the hope that the breaking point would be reached for the Germans.

After the disastrous day of July 1, the British spent two weeks in eking out their gains on the southern part of their front, preparing for a push toward Bapaume. The strong German defenses in the region of the Ancre were not again attacked for weeks. On July 14 General Haig made another forward assault. The British also made gains in this attack, but on a more limited front. The French had been able to increase their gains in the early days of July, but the French attack on the right was always secondary to the British assault in the center, and the French were never strong enough to win a decision in the battle.

After July 14 General Haig spent a month in preparations for a wider attack on the German positions, making constant small gains in the regions of the original advances. The next general advance was on August 18, and for three weeks there was hard fighting, the Allies still pushing forward and eating into the German positions. These attacks were continued through September, and on September 25 began "the heaviest of the many engagements"<sup>1</sup> of this phase of the battle. By October 1 the British

<sup>1</sup> Ludendorff.



command was encouraged<sup>1</sup> by the fact that, along a front of ten or twelve miles, practically all the original German positions had been won, and in England this was thought to be the beginning of the end.

Another fact in the military situation was not understood. So much was made of winning possession of German intrenchments constructed for permanent use that it was not yet realized that the new, comparatively quickly made, German defenses were becoming harder to take. As the Germans retired and again dug themselves in, the German leaders found that their irregular and improvised trenches were better than the old positions.

In fact the value of "hasty intrenchments",<sup>2</sup> which had become a great factor in warfare, had been even impaired by the efforts to improve and strengthen them. The fundamental value of hasty intrenchments consists in their flexibility and mobility. This had been lost to a great degree by the use of conventionalized lines of defense. By this time the new and dangerous German Command had taken charge of the Western front,<sup>3</sup> and Hindenburg and Ludendorff were quick to learn the lessons of the battle.

Ludendorff's account of these observations is one of the most interesting things in his narrative, and it shows that the German Command was much quicker to learn these lessons than were any of the Allied leaders.

"The course of the Somme battle had also supplied important lessons with respect to the construction and plan of our lines. The very deep underground forts

<sup>1</sup> "This stage of the battle constituted a prolonged and severe struggle for mastery between the contending armies, in which, although progress was slow and difficult, the confidence of our troops in their ability to win was never shaken." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>2</sup> American tactics in *The World War*, Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> Falkenhayn had been superseded as Chief of Staff by Hindenburg on August 29, 1916.

had to be replaced by shallow constructions. . . . Concrete 'pill boxes' . . . had acquired an increasing value. The conspicuous lines of trenches . . . supplied far too good a target for the enemy artillery. The whole system of defense had to be made broader and looser and better adapted to the ground. . . . Forward infantry positions with a wide field of fire were easily seen by the enemy. They could be destroyed by the artillery fire of the enemy, and were very difficult to protect by our own artillery. Positions farther back, with a narrower firing field and more under the protection of our own guns, were retained. They were of special service in big fights."

"The decisive value of artillery observation and the consequent necessity of paying great attention to the selection of positions had also become apparent."

"Here also was much to be done; so much had changed, so much became completely transformed."<sup>1</sup>

Ludendorff also writes of important changes in tactics brought about by the new Command. He goes at the root of the matter by saying that the "excessive use of hand grenades" was a mistake. "The infantry soldier had forgotten his shooting through use of grenades. He had to relearn it."

All this meant a great improvement in methods by the Germans in consequence of the changes originated by these remarkable men, — and these changes were costly to the Allies. For it must be recognized that the Allied commanders had not also learned these lessons, and they adhered only too closely to their ideas of "stabilized" warfare until the rude awakening of 1918.

Of the further course of the battle Ludendorff writes: "In October the attacks continued in undiminished force. . . . We sustained losses, yet an effective stiffening of our defense began to be perceptible."

<sup>1</sup> "Ludendorff's Own Story."

In this way the Battle of the Somme continued until the bad weather came on, and the desperate struggle died away in rain and mud. It had been prolonged until the middle of November. An area of shell-scarred terrain had been gained by the Allies, but beyond these captured German positions there was still an unimpaired German battle line. The ground gained had indented the Noyon salient, so that from Arras to the Aisne it was an awkward line to hold, and the Germans abandoned this sector for a straighter line early in the next spring. Even this eventual result was not an important tactical gain, for the new German line was held in 1917 without any great hardship.

All that could be claimed for the Allies, as an actual result of the Battle of the Somme, was the attrition of the German forces in this long struggle. These German losses in men and wastage of material should be considered as affecting the course of the war. It was simply a question of whether a sufficient amount of damage had been done to the Germans in the wear and tear of the long battle to compensate for the price paid by the Entente Allies. The French losses had been comparatively light, and it is probable that they had inflicted losses on the Germans that nearly balanced their own. The losses of the British had been enormous. In the long time the Battle of the Somme lasted, there had been months when the British losses were far more than one hundred thousand per month. It is hard to see that any compensating losses had been inflicted on the Germans. The totals of prisoners and guns, reported by Sir Douglas Haig for the long period between July 1 and November 18 ("Just over 38,000 . . . 29 heavy guns, 96 field guns . . .") do not suggest excessive German losses.

Without doubt the Battle of the Somme relieved the situation at Verdun to a great extent, and this

MAP NO. 13. THE WESTERN FRONT, 1916  
(This map is diagrammatic only)

The Allies were unable to undertake any offensive on the Western Front in the first half of 1916.

① German offensive against Verdun. Shaded area indicates gains made by the Germans.

Second half of 1916. The Battle of the Somme (July-November, 1916).

② British attacks north of the Somme.

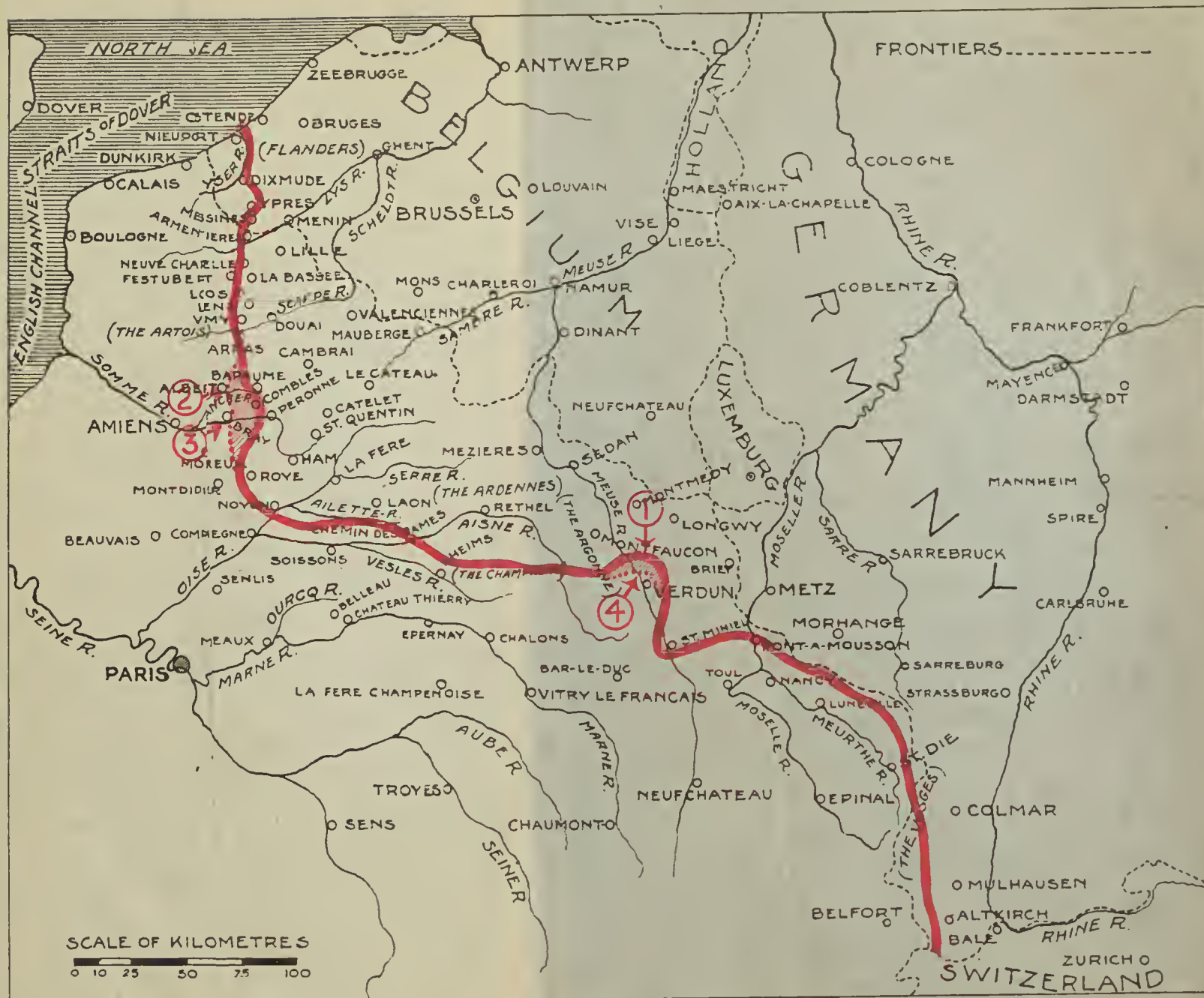
③ French attacks along the Somme and south of the river.

●●●●●●●● Battle line at beginning of Battle of the Somme. Shaded area indicates ground gained.

④ French counter attacks at Verdun, which practically recovered the terrain lost.

■ Battle line at the end of 1916.





MEJSKA  
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SCALE OF MILES



should be counted as affecting the military situation. But one of the first acts of the Hindenburg Command had been to induce the German Emperor to "give the momentous order for the cessation of the offensive at Verdun",<sup>1</sup> and the Germans were no longer wasting troops in this useless effort.

There was no sign that the Somme offensive had drawn away German troops from the East, where the situation had changed for the worse, with Russia and Rumania hard pressed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Ludendorff's Own Story."

<sup>2</sup> "If our western adversaries failed to obtain any decisive results in the battles of 1915 to 1917, it must be ascribed to a certain unimaginativeness in their generalship. The necessary superiority in men, war material and ammunition was certainly not lacking, nor can it be suggested that the quality of the enemy troops would not have been high enough to satisfy the demands of a more vigorous and ingenious leadership." Hindenburg, "Out of My Life."

## CHAPTER XXI

EVENTS OF THE SECOND HALF OF 1916<sup>1</sup>

CAPTURE OF GORIZIA. RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE.  
RUMANIA IN THE WAR. GREECE IN THE WAR.

At the beginning of the latter half of 1916, when the two great battles of Verdun and the Somme were being fought on the Western front, two offensives of the Entente Allies were being prepared in other regions. In consequence of the enforced withdrawal of Austrian troops from the Italian front, to combat the Russian advance in the southeast, the Italians in July, 1916, had a great numerical superiority over the Austrians. Taking advantage of this situation, General Cadorna was preparing to capture Gorizia, which had been one of the chief Italian objectives. On the southeastern front, at the same time, the Russian armies were making ready to follow up their successes and to push forward in force against Kovel and Lemberg.

On the Italian front the Italians had really been preparing for this attack on Gorizia for many months. The stronghold on the Isonzo was considered the key to the Carso and Trieste. It had beaten off the Italian attacks in 1915, and General Cadorna had resolved that the next assaults should be with a force that could not be withstood. Consequently his preparations were made on a large scale in troops, munitions, and supplies. The Italian general had been obliged to interrupt these efforts to deal with the Austrian offen-

sive of May and June in the Trentino, but, after the diversion of Austrian troops to the Russian front, General Cadorna again renewed his preparations for the attack on Gorizia.

The Italians were ready to take the offensive early in August, and on August 6 the drive against Gorizia began. It was immediately successful. The heavy Italian bombardment destroyed the first Austrian positions, and by the night of August 8 there were no Austrians left on the western bank of the Isonzo. The fighting had been desperate in the mountains, but to cross the Isonzo and capture Gorizia was comparatively simple, and on August 9 the city was in the hands of the Italians.

At last, after many delays and disappointments, Italy had won a victory in the war. The moral effect upon the Italian nation was very great. The long postponed triumph aroused popular enthusiasm, and it was believed to be the promise of greater victories to come. In the countries of the Entente Allies it was also thought that Italy had won an important victory, and that General Cadorna was inaugurating a decisive campaign. This enthusiasm in Italy had the effect of doing away with one anomalous phase of the situation in regard to Italy in the war. The original declaration of war (May 23, 1915) had been against Austria-Hungary alone. It is true the Italians had declared war upon Turkey (August 20, 1915) and Bulgaria (October 18, 1915), but through all the months of fighting, although the Germans were aiding the Austrians in every way, Italy had remained formally at peace with Germany. After the victory at Gorizia, Italy declared war against Germany (August 28, 1916).

The actual tactical results soon showed that the importance of the capture of Gorizia had been greatly exaggerated. In fact, there were defenses beyond Gorizia that were just as strong, and the Carso was by

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 14 at the end of this chapter.



no means won. Instead of proving to be the entrance to the Carso and the road to Trieste, the Italians found that the capture of Gorizia was only the beginning of greater tasks in the difficult mountainous country. In another month the Italians had ceased to make gains of any importance, and the campaign on the Isonzo was practically over for the year 1916. The cold weather, and the end of active operations for the winter, found the Italians still held in a mountainous country where the natural difficulties had made it possible for the Austrians to establish new lines of defense.

On the Russian front General Brusiloff renewed his offensive in July. The first thrust of the Russian armies in June, 1916, had resulted in establishing two salients pushing into the Austrian positions, one toward Kovel with a front of over one hundred miles, and an advance of about fifty miles beyond the original Austrian positions, including Lutsk and Dubno, which had been captured. In the south the Russian advance had been in Bukowina beyond Czernowitz toward Stanislaw. The Volhynia salient beyond Lutsk toward Kovel had proved vulnerable for counter attacks. It was on this sector that the first check had been given to the Russian advance by the German troops, which had reinforced the Austrians.

The initial move of General Brusiloff's renewed assault in July was to push forward on the north of the Volhynia salient. This was accomplished on a wide front, the Russians crossing the Styr and carrying their line forward to the Stochod River, behind which the Germans and Austrians had prepared another line of defense. These gains had been made by the middle of July, but the new defenses of the Germans and Austrians on the Stochod proved very strong, and the Russian advance toward Kovel was arrested. This advance to the Stochod had straightened out the

Lutsk salient on the north, so that it was no longer subject to counter attacks, and the Russians were only a little over twenty miles from Kovel.

On the south of this salient the Russians also made a strong advance, anticipating a German counter attack. They had captured Brody on July 27. By this gain the Russian line on the south of the salient was also straightened, and it was advanced in the direction of Lemberg. The seriousness of this situation, and the need to strengthen their forces on this sector was at once recognized by the Central Powers, and General Hindenburg was given sole control of the German and Austrian forces in the regions involved.

In the Bukowina sector the Russians had also made gains, although their success had not been won so quickly. Stanislaw was captured on August 10. The aggregate of these successes made an impressive total. The whole Russian battle front, from the Pripet marshes to the Carpathians, had been moved forward in alignment with the Russian gains in June. There was exultation among the Entente Allies, and a great moral effect had been produced in the East. In August it was thought that the Russian armies were on the point of capturing Lemberg and Kovel and that the Austrians could not be saved.

This apparent success of the Russian offensive brought Rumania into the war on the side of the Entente Allies (August 28, 1916). The position of Rumania in relation to the war had been peculiar from the beginning. The nation cherished ambitions to win Transylvania, just as Italy longed for the Trentino. The Rumanians were anxious to use the war as a means to gain the coveted province. Consequently Rumania had been waiting with a mobilized army, and watching for a favorable turn of events that would give them the opportunity to seize Transylvania. From the Rumanian point of view the way to

gain this end was to choose the right moment to conquer Transylvania by arms, and to be in a position to claim the province as Rumania's due at the peace table after the war.

Great influence had been brought to bear upon the Rumanians by both sides, especially by Germany and Russia. After the Russian successes in the summer of 1916, the feeling in Rumania was that to wait any longer was to lose the chance of sharing the fruits of victory.<sup>1</sup> Austria was thought to be on the point of military collapse, and it was assumed that Transylvania would be an easy conquest. Consequently Rumania accepted the influence of Russia as paramount in the situation, and declared war upon Austria-Hungary. The Rumanian armies at once invaded Transylvania, and in the early days of September this province was being overrun without much resistance.

But never was there a greater miscalculation than that made by Rumania. In reality the Russian offensive had reached its maximum at the very time Rumania declared war, and the Russians were being checked all along the line by the German reinforcements. These had been liberally provided for the Austrians by the German Command which had taken the situation in charge.<sup>2</sup>

At this time there was also a change in the military control of Germany which was of ill omen for Rumania. Falkenhayn had been removed from the leadership of the German Great General Staff in consequence of the failure of its protracted Verdun offensive to win results that would compensate for the heavy German losses. This failure was the final

<sup>1</sup>"As was known to me, the Russian Government tried to persuade Roumania to enter the war in June. . . . But this chance was missed by Roumania: . . ." General Gourko, "In Russia, 1914-1917."

<sup>2</sup>"From the middle of August onward the new front, under the control of the Commander-in-Chief in the East, began to hold." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

blow for the military régime of 1914. The demand for Hindenburg had become insistent, and he had been made Chief of Staff, — practically military dictator of Germany.<sup>1</sup> This implied the Hindenburg-Ludendorff control of all the armies of the Central Powers and presaged a dangerous force directed against the Allies.<sup>2</sup>

The new German Command at once showed that it was again master of the military situation in the East, as it was able to deal promptly with the attack of Rumania upon Austria-Hungary. Even with a new nation and strong armies added to the enemies of the Central Powers, at the time when the Teutons were supposed to be hard pressed, Hindenburg and Ludendorff were not taken at a disadvantage, but they were ready for just such a crisis.<sup>3</sup> The German Command had founded its calculations on the well-known obsession of the Rumanians to invade Transylvania, and had assumed that such an invasion would be made by the Rumanians as soon as war was declared. Without arousing the suspicions of their enemies, two strong armies were being gathered to operate against Rumania when the over-confident Rumanians made the expected mistake of invading Transylvania.<sup>4</sup>

An Austro-German army under Hindenburg's

<sup>1</sup>"On August 28 (1916) the chief of the military cabinet, General von Lyncken, called to inform me the Kaiser had asked General von Hindenburg to visit and advise him as to the new situation in the East. . . ."

"The following morning, August 29, my resignation was accepted." Falkenhayn.

<sup>2</sup>"I myself have often characterized my relations with General Ludendorff as those of a happy marriage." "Out of My Life," Hindenburg.

<sup>3</sup>"One thing is certain: Rumania's accelerated entrance into the war did not help the new ally any. A few short telegrams issued from the German army headquarters sufficed to set in motion the military measures long prepared." Falkenhayn.

<sup>4</sup>"It was regarded as a foregone conclusion that . . . she would . . . first try to get possession of the most coveted prize, Transylvania. . . . A decision was quickly come to as to the counter-move." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.



predecessor, Falkenhayn, was prepared to strike against the left flank of the armies invading Transylvania, to overcome them in detail. The second army, a mixed force of Germans, Bulgarians, and Turks under the formidable Mackensen, was to invade



No. 15. THE RUMANIAN CAMPAIGN, 1916.

- (1) Invasion of Transylvania by three Rumanian armies.
  - (2) Attacks by Austro-German army of Falkenhayn.
  - (3) Mackensen's conquest of Dobrudja.
  - (4) Mackensen's attack from the south.
- X X X X Line to which the Rumanians retreated.  
(This map is diagrammatic only.)

Dobrudja, and the Rumanians would be attacked both in the north and in the south by unexpected forces. Both assaults were made with the momentum that had characterized Hindenburg's other drives. The unfortunate Rumanians were swept out of Transylvania, as their armies were taken on the flanks and

beaten in detail, and Falkenhayn invaded northern Rumania. In the meantime Mackensen's forces had invaded Dobrudja, and that province was also the scene of "a brilliant success"<sup>1</sup> for the Central Powers. After the defeat of the Rumanians in this region, German reinforcements were sent to Mackensen, who moved his army across the Danube and attacked the main Rumanian armies from the south. At the same time Falkenhayn pressed his attacks from the north. Between these two forces the Rumanians had no chance. In November and December their country was overrun, as Serbia had been. The armies of Falkenhayn and Mackensen were united and moved on Bucharest, which was occupied on December 6. The remnants of the Rumanian troops retreated into Moldavia, and the short existence of Rumania as a factor in the war was over. The Russian forces in Bukowina had made feeble attempts to reinforce the defeated Rumanians, but only served to help them to find a refuge.

This complete victory over Rumania, with the Allies powerless to give any assistance, showed how little actual pressure was being exerted upon the military forces of the Central Powers at this time. Never was the advantage of their interior communications more evident. The German Command had been able to so strengthen the Austrians that the Russian incursions were stopped, and German leadership had accomplished the conquest of the Rumanians,<sup>2</sup> without any weakening of the German forces in other regions that would allow the Allies to gain.

At this time the waste of German troops at Verdun had been very great, and the Battle of the Somme was being fought with all the forces that Great Britain

<sup>1</sup> Ludendorff.

<sup>2</sup> "In the battles of movement of the Rumanian Campaign, German leadership had once more manifested its superiority." Ludendorff.

could throw into the contest, with the assistance of the French. Yet the new German Command not only managed to wear down the Somme offensive, but was able to maintain an unbroken defense, even though German troops had to be sent from the Western front to reinforce the Austrians in the East. The new Austrian defenses in the Isonzo region were being safely held against the Italians, and the defense of the Austrians against the Russians had been so strengthened by German leaders<sup>1</sup> and German troops that the Russians never again endangered the situation in the southeast.

All this was not appreciated at the time, but the Central Powers in the last half of 1916 had again won important military results. This is even reflected in Ludendorff's book, although his post-war narrative, for all too evident reasons and purposes, constantly depicts the Central Powers as struggling for existence ("the defense of the Fatherland") against overpowering odds. He draws a horribly gloomy picture of the military situation at the time of the Hindenburg-Ludendorff supreme control, and yet he unconsciously shows that this situation was not desperate.<sup>2</sup>

There was more fighting, but the Russian armies were not able to make headway against the Austro-Germans, and Lemberg and Kovel were never really in danger.<sup>3</sup> The Russian armies had fought wonderfully well in spite of their handicaps in supplies. They had borne the full brunt of the war in 1915, and in 1916 their tasks had again been severe.<sup>4</sup> The Russian losses

<sup>1</sup> "Good liaison and co-operation between ourselves and the Austrian headquarters was thus a certainty for the future." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

<sup>2</sup> "The successful close of the year 1916." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

<sup>3</sup> "After further wavering, our front against the Russian front was stabilized by the middle of September." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

<sup>4</sup> "... the poor results obtained up to the year 1917. Happily for the Entente, the enemy was obliged during these years to cope first with the Russian and then the Roumanian armies." Marshal Foch's Introduction to "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

#### MAP NO. 14. THE EASTERN FRONT, 1916

(This map is diagrammatic only)

The Renewed Russian offensives under General Brusiloff.

..... Battle line at the first of June, 1916.

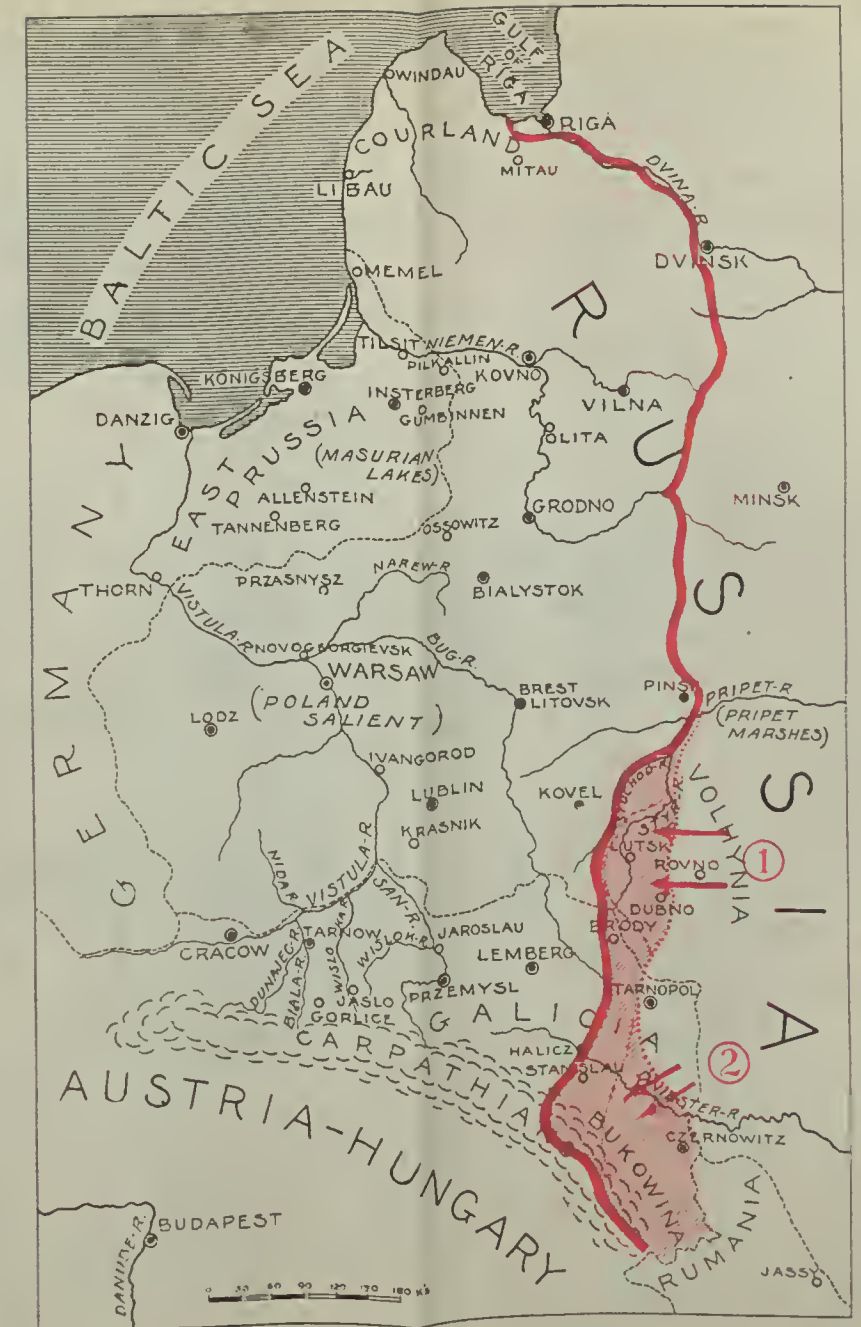
① Russian gains in Volhynia.

② Russian gains in Bukowina.

----- Advance of the Russian line at the first of July, 1916. Shaded area indicates ground gained.

Additional shaded area indicates ground gained in the last half of 1916.

— Battle line at the end of 1916.





had been so heavy in these campaigns that the armies and the nation could not endure them, and the end of the year saw the last of the Russian armies as a factor in the war.

The Allied army at Saloniki had been moved north to prevent threatened incursions of the Bulgarians, and later, in conjunction with the Serbs, Monastir had been retaken (November 18, 1916), but the uncertain attitude of Greece had prevented any movement in force against the Bulgarians that would give real help to the Rumanians. There had been turmoil in Greece, with King Constantine constantly trying to influence the nation in favor of Germany. The Greeks had risen against their King, and a Provisional Government had been organized by the pro-Ally Venizelos. This government was recognized by the Entente Allies in October, 1916, and Athens was occupied by the Allies, who took possession of the Greek Navy and the forts. The Greek Provisional Government afterwards declared war against Germany and Bulgaria (November 28, 1916), and in spite of occasional outbreaks the influence of the Entente Allies was paramount in Greece from this time.

For months the Italians had been sending troops into Albania, and at the end of 1916 this Italian army was probably over 200,000. Although this occupation of Albanian territory aroused the jealousy of Greece, it added an element of strength for the Entente Allies in this region.

## CHAPTER XXII

## THE WAR IN THE AIR

At the end of 1916 the relation of aircraft to the grand tactics of the war had been fairly well established. It should be stated at once that, although great changes had been brought about by the use of aircraft, they had not become the determining factor in the war that had been prophesied. At the outbreak of hostilities the possibilities of war waged from the air seemed endless. The appeal to the imagination was strong. Armies were at once endowed with eyes far aloft in the air, and great fleets of aircraft were to follow, able to shower destruction on their helpless prey below, and making useless all armies with earth-bound equipment.

These prophecies failed of fulfillment. Other revolutionary weapons, the heavy artillery and the submarines, exceeded all expectation and became decisive elements in warfare, but in spite of all the attention given to aviation and the vast sums expended upon aircraft, the grand tactics of the war were not controlled by the war in the air. The armies with eyes in the air became realities, but the destructive fleets of aircraft were never evolved, in the sense of being independent offensive forces that gained military results.

It was evident that the obvious and easiest objective for bombardment from the air was England. The short flight over the Channel was practically free from interference when approaching and retreating from the objective. Consequently England became

the principal point of attack for the Zeppelin dirigible airships, upon the development of which Germany had made great expenditures in the years preceding the war. The huge gas-inflated bags were thought of great military value at the beginning of the war, and in 1915 the Germans had begun to use them in attempts to bombard England. Attacks had also been made upon Paris and other cities, but England and London became constant objects of attack.

These bombardments from Zeppelins were continued throughout the year 1916, and caused great damage to life and property, especially in London; but the airships, even in the early attacks when there was no organized defense, were unable to locate targets of military value. There were always haphazard, drifting bombardments, dropping bombs recklessly without any definite aim. It is no exaggeration to say that these Zeppelin raids, extending over months,<sup>1</sup> never found a target which meant serious military or administrative damage. The raids were simply a useless destruction of civilian lives and private property. No military result was ever attained. As time went on and aircraft guns were improved, and airplanes used in conjunction with them in defense, the vulnerability of the Zeppelins became a fatal defect, and they were practically abandoned in offensive tactics.

Airplanes were next used by the Germans in many bombardments of Great Britain and London, but their lack of success against this easy objective became the measure of the failure of airplanes to attain results as weapons of offense. In all the battle areas of the war airplanes were used to drop explosives upon enemies, and of course they exerted an influence and did an amount of damage, but it cannot be said that airplanes became reliable weapons for winning military results by bombardments.

<sup>1</sup> There were over forty Zeppelin raids against Great Britain.



Before the war airplanes had a great vogue in Europe. Flying had become a popular sport, and the public mind had been thrilled by the feats of aviators, of which the basis was speed. The military aviators had been prominent in these exhibitions, and very naturally both sides developed military aircraft of which the main characteristic was speed. On the other sustaining element, the water, it is recognized that the problem of designing a warship is controlled by the three balanced factors of speed, armor, and guns. Whatever increase is given to any one of these three must be taken away from one or both of the others. The same inexorable law applies to the warships of the air, and the type of airplane used by both sides had sacrificed so much to speed that it had very little powers of offensive. At best their efforts were hurried, ill-directed dropping of bombs which did not accomplish tactical results.

This use of the same type of airplane by both sides led to an unexpected result. Here was a strange case of the first extensive use of a new element in war, — in that it merely added a like amount to each side of the equation. Each side used the new weapon in practically the same way, and airplanes soon became a part of the fixed conditions of warfare. They were a necessary element in the tactical use of the new armies, and they were valuable auxiliaries in many ways, but neither side gained any marked advantage from the first use of the most novel force in warfare.

If either army had possessed airplanes when the other army had none, or if there had been for either side an overwhelming superiority against which the enemy planes could not exist, or if one side had developed a real offensive in airplanes, it would have been a different story. But, with conditions as described, the airplanes became scouts and artillery spotters for the opposing armies — and such they remained, giving

an element of practically equal military value to each side.

The dramatic battles in the air between the planes filled much space in the public eye, but, to get at the real value of this phase of the war in the air, it is only necessary to ask what tactical results were accomplished by these fights. The answer cannot be evaded, that, while aviators have been having an exciting time among themselves, these battles won little military result for either side. Neither side drove its enemy from the air nor established a superiority that would cripple the enemy air scouts. It was a matter of give and take, leaving the same factors in aircraft for both sides.

At different times there was much talk of winning superiority in the air. It is probable that the Germans had a superiority through most of the war, and the Allies had the advantage in the last year. But neither side gained the tactical result of driving the enemy from the air on the battle line. Each side always had scouts and observers in the air, and the fallibility of airplanes as scouts has been one of the unexpected elements in the war. It had confidently been predicted that the eyes in the air meant the end of surprises in war. On the contrary there never has been a war in which there were so many surprises on a vast scale.<sup>1</sup>

Great movements of troops were not estimated by the aviators. Concentrations of hundreds of thousands of men and hundreds of guns were not counted by them.

<sup>1</sup> The following great movements of masses of troops were not estimated by aircraft observers:

German offensive against Russians (spring, 1915).

German offensive against Verdun (February, 1916).

Hindenburg's withdrawal to new line of defenses (spring, 1917).

Austro-German offensive against the Italians (October, 1917).

German offensive on Western front (March, 1918).

The Russian air service was not very efficient in 1915, but all the other manoeuvres on a large scale were made when the opposing armies possessed great numbers of highly organized aircraft scouts.

These failures were explained by many new conditions of warfare, which made observation difficult. Anti-aircraft guns were quickly developed, and a flight at ten thousand feet was hazardous over the enemy's position. This compulsion to fly at a high altitude made even the photographic observations blurred. The enormous amount of supplies and munitions, necessary for a modern army, created a continuous stream of transportation forward and backward behind the lines, under cover of which movements of troops and guns could be concealed. Great movements could also be made at night or on misty days, as observation was practically impossible in bad weather and darkness. Added to these disadvantages were all the devices of concealment and camouflage which were used by both armies.

The airplanes were of use to assist the artillery, but even here their limitations soon became recognized. The war had not lasted many months before the unreliability of the fast airplane as a spotter for artillery was plainly shown by the great numbers of captive balloons that appeared all along the lines on the Western front. The advantages of these quietly moored posts of observation were soon evident, — with their definite portions of terrain to observe, and their telephonic communication with the artillery below. An important function of the airplanes was to guard these observation balloons from attacks by hostile aircraft.

Yet, in spite of these limitations, airplanes established for themselves a useful place in the tactics of the war. They became an essential part of the make-up of armies and were always necessary in military operations. But the practical development of airplanes, so far as The World War was concerned, was limited to use as auxiliaries of armies, not as military forces in themselves. There were no important mili-

tary operations that may be said to have been dominated by airplanes.

Over the sea the aircraft were of use somewhat as over the land. It will readily be understood that they could observe greater areas of sea surface under favorable conditions; but it must also be realized that unfavorable weather conditions for observation were more frequent at sea. One additional great disadvantage on the sea was the inability of the airplane to navigate. When out of sight of the land, or of its ship, it was lost. This defect limited its powers of wide observation as a scout. In this respect the lighter-than-air dirigible has a great advantage over the airplane. In fact one of the most useful tasks of the Zeppelin or other dirigible seems to be that of an observer at sea. Captive observation balloons have also proved to be of value at sea, and they were used in the different navies.

At first it was hoped that aircraft would be of great use in detecting submerged U-boats, but experience showed that only in a flat calm could the submarine be seen at any real depth under the surface. The slightest ripple on the surface concealed the submerged U-boat. But for observing large areas of water, and marking the appearance of the U-boat on the surface, the airplane and the dirigible were of real value.

From the foregoing it will be seen that on the sea, as on the land, the use of aircraft in The World War was limited to acting as auxiliaries, — of ships, fleets, and coast forces. There were at times aircraft raids over the sea, but nothing that could be called a fleet operation as a naval offensive.



## CHAPTER XXIII

## THE WAR ON THE SEA, 1916

IN the early part of 1916, the naval policy of the German Government was vacillating between breaking away from international law, by renewing the illegal submarine warfare, and fear of the consequences. The German Government had realized that the American people was thoroughly aroused and was no longer to be put off with notes and excuses. After the tragedy of the *Lusitania* public opinion in the United States had begun to awake, and it had gradually become fixed in opposition to the illegal acts of the German U-boats. Germany was not yet at the stage where an actual break with the United States could be faced, and the German Government avoided the final issue.

The influence of Tirpitz and the advocates of unrestricted submarine warfare had decreased as the temper of America became dangerous. On March 17, Admiral Tirpitz was "dismissed",<sup>1</sup> being succeeded by Admiral Capelle, who undertook "to support the Chancellor in all naval political questions of which the submarine campaign was regarded as one."

In the same month occurred the outrage which brought forth so strong a protest from the United States that the German Government's illegal conduct of submarine warfare was definitely stopped for the time being. On March 24, 1916, the *Sussex*, a channel passenger steamship with Americans on board, was torpedoed, without warning, by a German U-boat.

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Tirpitz. "My Memoirs."

This was contrary to the pledges of Germany, as the *Sussex* was a passenger ship without military character. The sinking of this ship aroused intense indignation in the United States. At first the German Government attempted to deny the act, but on April 18 an ultimatum<sup>1</sup> was sent to Germany concerning the *Sussex* sinking by President Wilson, and Congress was informed by the President of the reasons for sending it.

So unmistakable was the attitude of the United States that the German Government capitulated,<sup>2</sup> and on May 5 gave a definite promise that illegal acts on the part of the German U-boats would be stopped. For the time being this agreement was kept, and the submarines, until the latter part of 1916, were not a serious factor in the war, although they still sank many ships of the Entente Allies.

This abandonment of the ruthless submarine campaign by the German Government was not understood by the Allies in two respects. It was hastily assumed that the campaign had been given up because it had failed on account of the limitations of the U-boats, not that it had been dropped on account of the action of the United States Government. This mistaken idea led to underestimating the danger from the submarines and to thinking that the measures taken against the U-boats had been sufficient to overcome their menace. It was also forgotten that there was a strong element in the German Navy, and in the German Government, that was in favor of unrestricted submarine warfare, that

<sup>1</sup> "To our note of April 10th, the incorrectness of which in fact was proved by the Americans, there followed the well-known American bullying note of April 20th, which demanded the abandonment without delay of the system of submarine warfare that had prevailed, and threatening a rupture of relations." Admiral Tirpitz. "My Memoirs."

<sup>2</sup> "After this note became public, I sent another memorandum to the Emperor, on April 24th, begging him not to give way to Wilson. I received no answer to this note, but the Government on May 4th sent a note to America yielding to their demands." Admiral Tirpitz. "My Memoirs."

this party still had so great influence that, at any favorable turn of events, illegal submarine warfare might be resumed.

Many U-boats were being built in Germany. Great improvements were being made in them, and the Germans were growing more expert in handling them. While this dangerous weapon was being prepared for use, it was a great mistake to underestimate its strength and to think that it would be easy to neutralize it. This false security in the lull of German submarine activity was costly for the Entente Allies.

In July the German merchant submarine *Deutschland* came into the harbor of Baltimore after a voyage from Germany. This was an isolated event of no importance, but it was given great advertisement in Germany to show the possibilities of breaking the blockade. It was announced as the first of many such commerce bearers which were to make Germany independent of the blockade on the surface of the ocean. The *Deutschland* made another voyage to America, but this was the total of such commercial ventures, and there was no effect whatever upon the blockade of Germany.

At this stage of the war the blockade had become an adverse factor which was doing serious damage to the Central Powers. More and more the Allied possession of Sea Power was influencing the course of the war. With the realization of the increasing harm that Germany was suffering through being shut off from the sea, came popular discontent with the German Navy, whose fleet of battleships had been held in the German bases with no signs of activity except hurried raids in the North Sea. In the years preceding the war the Imperial Government had encouraged a cult for the German Navy. There had been an enlarged program of building battleships, and the German nation was asking why nothing was done with

this much lauded battle fleet. When it became evident that Germany must yield to the demands of the United States and give up the submarine campaign, this dissatisfaction with the conduct of the German Navy became outspoken criticism that demanded a change.

Early in 1916 a new Commander-in-Chief had been assigned to the German battle fleet, Admiral Scheer. In response to this popular demand, Admiral Scheer made great efforts to improve the efficiency and morale of his command, and at times the fleet of battleships was taken to sea. These changed tactics were a demonstration for effect in Germany, but the Germans were undoubtedly prepared to fight the British fleet, if they engaged it in part or under conditions that would give the German fleet an advantage.

One of these sorties of the German High Seas Fleet brought on the Battle of Jutland (May 31, 1916). At the time there were many theories of other objectives on the part of the German Navy, — to cover the escapes of raiders, to get ships through the Baltic, etc. But all these ideas have been abandoned.

That afternoon (May 31, 1916) the British Grand Fleet was reported by its commanding officer, Admiral Jellicoe, as carrying out one of its periodical sweeps through the North Sea, with an advance force of six battle cruisers and four dreadnoughts far ahead of the main fleet under Vice Admiral Beatty. The German High Seas Fleet was on the North Sea at the same time with a similar advance force of five battle cruisers thrown out ahead under Vice Admiral Hipper. The Germans were able to manoeuvre their advance and their main fleet in such a way that the battle cruisers of the British advance lost two of their number, before joining the Grand Fleet, and when the British fleet was united, in the late afternoon, there were unfavorable conditions under which the greater force of the British could not be used to full advantage.



At the time the British Grand Fleet joined the advance force, which had been engaged, intermittent fog and mist hung over the water to an extent that was unusual, even for the North Sea. By making use of these conditions for concealing the German ships,



No. 16. CHART SHOWING THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND.

In relation to the surroundings on the North Sea.

(1) The Battle Field, May 31, 1916.

(2) Position of British fleet at "about 2.47 A.M." June 1, 1916.

(This map is diagrammatic only.)

by using smoke screens, and by making constant threats of torpedo attacks, the weaker German fleet was able to maintain an intermittent retiring battle with the British Grand Fleet until darkness came on.

The British Commander-in-Chief was then com-

pelled to decide whether to continue the battle through the dark hours, and Admiral Jellicoe decided that it was not wise to fight a night action under the circumstances. Neither did he think it advisable to remain in touch with the Germans through the night, as this might have entailed serious consequences for his battle-ships.<sup>1</sup> The Germans, thus released from British attacks, were able to return to their bases and report a general action between the German and British battle fleets, in which it was claimed the Germans had the advantage. As this was the only great naval action in the war, a detailed review of the Battle of Jutland has been included in the Appendix.

The fact that the German Navy had fought a battle of fleets and had returned to announce a victory over the British fleet caused a great sensation in Germany. The heavy British losses in the action, which were announced by the British Admiralty, seemed a confirmation to the Germans, and unquestionably the Battle of Jutland had a strong moral effect upon Germany at the very time some such stimulus was needed. It smoothed over the irritation of the German people against the German Navy, at this time when Germany had been obliged to modify her use of the U-boats upon the demand of the United States. For months after the battle the esteem of the German people for the German Navy remained high, and this helped to strengthen the German Government.

As a matter of fact the Battle of Jutland did not have any actual effect upon the situation on the seas. The British fleet still controlled the North Sea. The Entente Allies were still able to move their troops and

<sup>1</sup> "The British Fleet was not properly equipped for fighting an action at night. The German Fleet was. Consequently, to fight them at night would have only been to court disaster. Lord Jellicoe's business was to preserve the Grand Fleet, the main defence of the Empire, as well as of the Allied cause, not to risk its existence." Sir Percy Scott, "Fifty Years in the Royal Navy."

supplies over water-ways which were barred to the Germans. Not a German ship was released from port, and there was no effect upon the blockade. After Jutland, as before, the German fleet was confined to its bases, except for occasional sorties into the North Sea. It could not impose its power upon any part of the seas, and it could not make any effort to end the blockade. The Jutland action had cheered the German people but it had not given to Germany even a fragment of sea power.

On June 7 Lord Kitchener was lost at sea, when the British cruiser *Hampshire* was sunk by a mine in a gale off the Orkneys. At the time Lord Kitchener had ceased to be active in directing the war policies of England, and he was on his way to Russia to confer with the Russian Government. Although Lord Kitchener's limitations as a military administrator had been recognized, the appeal of his personality to the British public was still very strong, and in this respect he was a potent influence in Great Britain for continued effort in the war.

Throughout the rest of the year 1916 the submarines did a great amount of damage to the shipping of the Entente Allies, but the partisans of the U-boats in Germany claimed that the restriction placed upon their use was the only thing which prevented them from being a decisive factor in the war. The elation over the Battle of Jutland gave way to a restless demand for retaliation against the blockade, and, as the end of the year 1916 approached, there was more sympathy with the group in Germany which was in favor of unrestricted submarine warfare.

As a demonstration of the abilities of the U-boats, the German submarine U-53 was sent across the Atlantic and suddenly appeared in Newport on October 7, 1916. The status of this U-boat was of course that of a man-of-war visiting a neutral country, and it

could only remain in port twenty-four hours. The captain of the U-53 made formal calls upon the naval commanders at Newport, sent a letter to the German Ambassador at Washington, and then put to sea. When outside the jurisdiction of the United States, the U-53 sank five merchantmen and then returned to Germany. This act of the German submarine was evidently chiefly for effect in Germany. Any idea that it would produce a moral effect in the United States was a mistake.

Throughout the year 1916 the blockade had grown more effective, and it was all the time arousing stronger protests in Germany, as the people found themselves shut off from their accustomed sources of supply. These protests helped the arguments of the advocates of unrestricted submarine warfare. The Allied Sea Power had tightened its grip upon Germany, and the partisans of illegal warfare on the seas insisted that the U-boats would be able to overcome this disadvantage and win the war, if they were permitted to operate without restraint. The end of the year 1916 found this element so powerful in the German military councils that it was able to control the war policy of Germany.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE MILITARY SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF 1917<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of 1917 the military situation was again more unfavorable for the Entente Allies. Rumania had been quickly eliminated as a military factor in the war. Before the Rumanians made their ill-timed declaration of war, Rumania had been considered an offset against Bulgaria. This was ended, and Germany had not only conquered another weak nation, but had also gained new sources of supplies. In addition to this, in the minds of the Germans, the greatest result of the campaigns of the year 1916 was the consolidation of the conquered Rumanian territory with Bulgaria and the great part of Serbia which had been overrun by the Teutons in 1915. This meant that the strip had been greatly widened which connected the Central Powers with Turkey and the East.

The German Mittel Europa had thus been solidified in a military sense. It had been made safe from attack, and from the German point of view the German scheme for extension of power in the East seemed an accomplished fact. The Bridge to the East, which had been won in 1915, had not only been defended from attacks, but it had been strengthened.

Another important military result had been won by the Germans. The chief menace against the German Mittel Europa had been the Russian armies, and these had been so impaired in the 1916 campaign that their offensive power had been destroyed. The Russian

losses, even while Russian victories were apparently being won, had practically amounted to a final defeat for the Russian armies.

This fatal weakening of the Russians had not been appreciated in the other countries of the Entente Allies, and great things were still expected of the Russian armies in the spring of 1917. In Great Britain the disappointments of the year 1916 on the Western front, especially the great cost of the Battle of the Somme, had brought about dissatisfaction with the Asquith Ministry, which had been in office from the beginning of the war. In December, 1916, a political overturn brought about the fall of Premier Asquith, and the selection of Lloyd George to control the affairs of Great Britain in the war. Lloyd George had won the confidence of the British public by his able conduct as Minister of Munitions. The nation realized that he had accomplished great results, and he was consequently given plenary powers in the new British Government, the War Cabinet, which was practically built up around him.

The new Minister addressed himself to his tasks with great energy, and a new optimism began to be felt among the British people. In spite of the losses in the long-protracted Battle of the Somme, and the failure to win any decisive results, there was still the feeling that the British had established a military superiority over the Germans, that the bad weather had intervened, and that this had prevented the long-expected break in the German line. The gains that had been won from the Germans were in favor of this theory, and the British public was also encouraged by the evident fact that some of the hardly-won positions gave the British the advantage in sectors of the Noyon salient on the battle line which remained in the possession of the Germans at the end of 1916. It was maintained that these positions would provide

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 17 at the end of this chapter.

favorable points for attack against the Germans when the battle was renewed in the spring, and great preparations were being made for the renewal of this battle as a matter of course.

The energy of the new Lloyd George government, the great industrial output of Great Britain, and the increased numbers of men from conscription, were encouraging elements in the situation for Great Britain. Added to these was the conviction that greater preparations were being made in the other countries of the Entente Allies. In France the exultation of the nation over the defeat of the Germans at Verdun was demanding an offensive for 1917. In fact, at the beginning of 1917, this confidence was universal among the leaders of the Entente Allies. The following from a speech of Lloyd George in Parliament reflects the official view of the military situation at the first of the year 1917. "The Russian Army was better equipped in guns, in machine guns, and in munitions than it had ever been during the whole period of the war. For the first time in the whole course of the war the Russian gunners had plenty of ammunition — this year the Russian army began and was ready with the best equipment any Russian army ever had, and naturally our expectation was that, with a well-equipped and powerful Russian army pressing in the east, a well-equipped British and French army pressing in the west, and a well-equipped Italian army pressing in Italy, we should have been able to bring such pressure to bear upon the Prussian Army as to inflict a decisive defeat."

In fact, for the first time, the Entente Allies had a plan<sup>1</sup> for concerted military observations, and were hopeful of the result.

<sup>1</sup> " . . . unanimously agreed upon by a conference of military representatives of the Allied Powers held at French Headquarters in November, 1916.

"This plan comprised a series of offensives on all fronts, so timed as to

In Germany there was an appraisal of the military situation at the beginning of 1917 which was much nearer the true state of affairs. The Germans realized the great results that had been won by their armies in the East, and the confidence of the German people in Hindenburg was unlimited at this time, but there began to be signs of dissatisfaction. The uselessly prolonged Battle of Verdun with its enormous losses had hurt the prestige of the Imperial house. The attempt to gain distinction by having the Crown Prince in command of the assault on Verdun had involved him in its failure.

In spite of the successes that had been won, the final German victory was still postponed, and there was a restless feeling among the German people, which was the beginning of differences of opinion as to the conduct of the war in the hitherto united German nation. In fact, the strain of the war was at last telling upon Germany. The great efforts necessary to maintain the large armies, the losses, and the privations were having an effect upon the minds of the Germans.<sup>2</sup> The blockade was causing distress throughout the country, not yet to the extent of crippling the military strength of Germany, as was believed by many in the countries of the Entente Allies, but the Germans were suffering the hardships of war, which were forcing the nation to realize the fearful price in men and resources that had been paid for the conquests won by the German armies.

The nation began to grow impatient at the delay in securing the promised rewards of victory. It was only the beginning of discontent, but the German

assist each other by depriving the enemy of the power of weakening any one of his fronts in order to reinforce another." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>2</sup> "The effects which the intense pressure exerted by the military efforts of the Allies have had in discrediting militarism among the enemy peoples." War Cabinet Report.



Government recognized the danger signals, and realized that the German people might take control of the situation, if the war were unduly prolonged. The various moves of the German Government in the direction of proposals for peace in the latter part of 1916 were for effect at home as well as abroad.

It must not be thought that at this time there was any change in the German people to the extent of weakening the nation in a military sense. It was a mistake for the Entente Allies to make the hasty assumption that the German peace moves were a sign of military weakness. The German nation was undoubtedly feeling the strain, but Germany was still capable of a united military effort. However it was plain to the German Government that an endeavor should be made to force a decision if possible. This was a difficult problem at the beginning of 1917. At the first of 1915 and at the beginning of 1916 German military offensives had been the obvious moves, first in the East, then in the West. At the beginning of 1917 the military situation was very different.

To hold fast all that Germany had won made it necessary to maintain strong military forces on all the fighting fronts. There was no region where it would have been safe for the Central Powers to relax the pressure of their armies. Germany could not afford to withdraw troops from any sector to make a concentration for an offensive. It was true that Russia was on the point of collapse, but, as was afterwards proved in the first months of the Russian revolution, there was still a necessity for strong Teuton armies in that region.

In this situation the demands of the advocates of unrestricted submarine warfare became insistent for a new offensive by the submarines. As has been explained in preceding chapters, the war had shown that the U-boats could not be used successfully if they

fulfilled the recognized obligations of warfare on the sea. The time had come when the partisans of the submarines demanded that all restrictions should be removed, and that the German submarines should be sent into the seas to destroy at will, without regard to the safety of passengers and crews. The privations of the blockade were urged as an excuse, and every possible argument was drawn from this to show that Germany had been driven to unrestricted submarine warfare by the persecutions of the Entente Allies.

The advocates of unrestricted submarine warfare were most confident of the results that could be won if the U-boats operated without restraint. Great preparations had been made in submarines, and the types and efficiency of these crafts had been much improved. The calculations of the German naval experts showed that a blockade was possible which would isolate England. As in 1914, military necessity was urged to palliate a new infraction of international law, and the German Government, following the advice of the German Command,<sup>1</sup> decided that the German offensive of 1917 would be an unrestricted use of the U-boats.

A formal announcement was made by the German Government that new barred zones had been created on the seas, and that after February 1, 1917, ships in these zones would be destroyed. This area included practically all the waters about the British Isles and in the Mediterranean. It was a declaration that there would be a piratical warfare waged by the German Government, and this illegal warfare was the deliberate choice of the German Government as a means of winning the war. In the preceding years the Germans had receded from their illegal positions

<sup>1</sup> "In a long discussion on December 23, the Field Marshal expressed to the Chancellor his view that the adoption of unrestricted submarine warfare was essential." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

upon the demand of the United States, but this time the German Government persisted in its course.

The reader must realize that from February 1, 1917, Germany became an outlaw among nations. The German leaders had made their calculation. They had decided that they could win by these foul means and the result of this decision was upon their own heads.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Blockade must succeed within a limited number of weeks, within which America cannot effectively participate in the operations." Bethmann-Hollweg, 1917.

MAP No. 17. THE SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF 1917  
(This map is diagrammatic only)

The shaded area controlled by the Central Powers.  
— Battle fronts.      •••• neutral boundaries.

The Central Powers had again improved their position in 1916. Rumania had been defeated, and the Allies had not been able to exert sufficient pressure to save their new ally.

In spite of their ill success in 1916, the Entente Allies were optimistic at the first of 1917. The Allied commands believed that they had superior numbers and increased supplies. They had a concerted plan for early offensives on all fronts in 1917.

① A double offensive by the British and French on the Western Front.

② Renewed attacks by the Russians in Volhynia and Galicia.

③ Russian offensive in Asia Minor.

④ British attack on Bagdad.

⑤ Renewed Italian offensive.

The Central Powers had deliberately chosen to defend their gains on land, but to make their offensive on the sea by unrestricted U-boat warfare, which was to begin on February 1, 1917. The dotted lines indicate the proscribed areas on the seas.



THIS AREA DECLARED SAFE FOR NEUTRALS IN  
GERMAN CAMPAIGN OF UNRESTRICTED SUBMA-  
RINE WARFARE BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1, 1917.



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## CHAPTER XXV

### THE UNITED STATES IN THE WAR

THE German Government adhered to its illegal program, and on February 1, 1917, the German submarines began to destroy ships in the prescribed zones, casting aside all international law on the seas. This U-boat campaign had been carefully planned, and, from the first of the lawless undertaking, it was shown that the submarine was the most formidable destroyer of commerce in the world's history, if it was operated without regard for the safety of passengers and crew. The methods which had been used earlier in the war against the U-boats by the Allied navies, and which had too hastily been assumed sufficient to check their ravages, were found of little value on the high seas against the improved German craft. Sinkings were recorded in the first weeks of the campaign that threatened a great decrease of the world's tonnage of shipping;<sup>1</sup> and it became evident that the Central Powers possessed a new weapon which was a great menace to the Entente Allies.

Yet the successful use of the U-boats in defiance of the laws of humanity at once became a boomerang for the German Government. When it was found that Germany intended to persist in this unlawful undertaking, the United States broke off relations with the German Government, and war between the

<sup>1</sup> "The immediate effect of the new campaign was to double the rate of losses which had been incurred during 1916, and these losses rose rapidly to a climax in March and April." Report of War Cabinet.

United States and Germany became inevitable. The cynical conduct of the German Government was a direct challenge; and there was no course other than to hand the German Ambassador his passports, — to have no more dealings with a Government that had broken its pledges and shown bad faith from the start.

On February 3, 1917, the President of the United States addressed both houses of Congress, and announced that diplomacy had failed, and that relations with Germany had been severed. In his address the President made the sharp distinction between the people of Germany and its autocratic Government, which was destined to influence the course of the war.

"We are sincere friends of the German people and earnestly desire to remain at peace with the Government which speaks for them. — God grant we may not be challenged by acts of willful injustice on the part of the Government of Germany."

These acts of injustice were not long delayed. The German Ambassador, after receiving his papers and leaving for Berlin, had asked his government to delay action until he had made a last plea for peace to the German Emperor, but the Imperial Government refused to change its policy and persisted in the illegal submarine campaign. On March 12 orders were given to arm our merchantmen for defense against the submarines.

On March 1 the Administration had revealed the contents of an intercepted letter written by Zimmermann, the German Foreign Secretary, to the German Minister in Mexico.

Berlin, Jan. 19, 1917.

"On the first of February we intend to begin submarine warfare unrestricted. In spite of this, it is our intention to endeavor to keep neutral the United States of America.

"If this attempt is not successful, we propose an alliance on the following basis with Mexico:

"That we shall make war together and together make peace. We shall give general financial support and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas and Arizona. The details are left to you for settlement.

"You are instructed to inform the President of Mexico of the above in great confidence as soon as it is certain that there will be an outbreak of war with the United States and suggest that the President of Mexico, on his own initiative, should communicate with Japan suggesting adherence at once to this plan; at the same time, offer to mediate between Germany and Japan.

"Please call to the attention of the President of Mexico that the employment of ruthless submarine warfare now promises to compel England to make peace in a few months.

"ZIMMERMANN."

This outrageous letter was in itself a cause of war, and its publication brought home to the American people the utter treachery of the German Government.<sup>1</sup> In all sections of the country there was no longer any possibility of doubt as to the character of the German rulers and their intentions in regard to America. Additional provocation soon followed from the conduct of the submarine, and on April 6 Congress passed the resolution of war with Germany. The President signed the Declaration of War on the same day.

After long patience the United States had been driven into a declaration of war by repeated hostile acts of Germany. These acts were not only Germany's

<sup>1</sup> "According to the view of our ambassador [von Hintze] . . . Zimmermann's well-known telegram rendered Wilson decisive assistance in the realization of his wish to take his stand against us." Tirpitz, "My Memoirs."



repeated breaches of faith and brutal defiance of humanity on the seas, but Germany's proved attempts to incite Japan and Mexico to war with the United States, to disrupt the country and take away its territory. If ever a country was justified in entering a war, the United States was justified and in the right, and we should believe that this right prevailed.<sup>1</sup>

Our country was made strong by the fact that there was no trace of selfishness in our participation in the war. Our position was above question. The conditions that had brought on the war were not in any way made by us. We had not committed any hostile act. We had preserved a strict neutrality, and we had attempted to bring about peace between the warring groups. Our President had stated our objects so plainly that there could be no misunderstanding in this respect, and even our enemies were forced to believe that the United States fought for a principle and not for gain.

So evident was this that the United States became a moral force in the war. This influence was felt throughout the nations allied with Germany. Especially in Austria-Hungary it was noticeable that the entrance of the United States against the Central Powers had a widespread moral effect. Even in Germany, where every attempt was made to brand the United States with hypocrisy, the German people really knew that our nation was fighting for a cause, and that our nation believed its cause to be just.

The wise distinction made by our President between the German Government and the German people became an issue in Germany itself.<sup>2</sup> It was no mere

<sup>1</sup> In a tirade against propaganda Ludendorff unconsciously paid a tribute to the spirit of America: "For American soldiers the war became as it were a crusade against us." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

<sup>2</sup> "By working on our democratic sentiments the enemy propaganda succeeded in bringing our government into discredit in Germany." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

coincidence that the German Emperor, in the month of our declaration of war, made tentative proposals of popular legislative government for the Germans. There was no immediate social revolution, but the existing dissatisfaction of the German people was given a real basis. What the German Government feared at the beginning of 1917 had become crystallized. In spite of all attempts to divert attention, the rift had been made. The German Government was being scrutinized and held accountable by the German people.

Yet it must be realized that this moral force would not have been effective if it had not been backed up by physical force. If the German Government had won its victory, it would have satisfied the German people. As was shown by the event, if the German Government failed to win its victory, the German people would turn upon it and destroy it.

The German Government had founded its calculations upon the premise that our nation would not be able to exert its physical force before Germany had won the war. The Germans based all their calculations on their own formulas.<sup>1</sup> Their methods of making armies involved months and years of training. From their point of view our nation was incapable of organizing an army in time to have any effect on the war. They had appreciated our great resources in material, and the Germans had been reluctant to involve the United States in the war, to have our wealth at the service of the Entente Allies; but they had never counted on the Americans as a military factor in the war. Just as our Civil War had been misunderstood and the excellence of our extemporized armies unappreciated, so in 1917 the Germans could

<sup>1</sup> "If matters came to a breach, it was not to be assumed that America would make her influence felt in the war before the submarine campaign had taken effect." "The German General Staff and its Decisions." Falkenhayn.

not realize that an intelligent people, absolutely united in a just cause, was capable of a great military effort. It was even assumed that conscription would not be adopted until after a long fight, as in Great Britain.

The result showed how entirely the spirit that Americans devote to a just cause had been misunderstood. War was declared in April. Before the end of May four measures had been adopted which sealed the doom of Germany in the war. President Wilson had signed the seven billion dollar War Bond Bill. The Federal Shipping Board had begun its building program. The largest Army and Navy Bill in the history of nations had nearly reached a total of four billion dollars; and on May 18 the President signed the draft bill, calling upon all men between twenty-one and thirty. These measures meant that the United States was to make the greatest effort that had ever been made in war by a united people.<sup>1</sup> This was the handwriting on the wall that foretold the downfall of German militarism.

<sup>1</sup> "I will tell you what I feel about America. She came into the war at a time when the need for her coming was most urgent. Her coming was like an avalanche. The world has never seen anything like it. Her great army of all ranks gave service that no man would, in 1917, have believed possible." Lloyd George.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### EVENTS IN THE EAST, SPRING OF 1917

#### CAPTURE OF BAGDAD. THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

THE British had profited by the lesson of the failure of the first unfortunate expedition against Bagdad, which had never been strong enough for the task, and had been obliged to surrender at Kut-el-Amara in the spring of 1916. At the beginning of the year 1917 a new and adequate British expedition was approaching Bagdad. This new British army was commanded by General Maude, and it followed a carefully laid out plan, pushing forward a railroad for transportation, as in Kitchener's successful Soudan campaign. There was no organized force of Turks strong enough to oppose this British effort to win Bagdad, and the expedition had moved steadily forward toward its objective without any serious setbacks.

At the same time strong Russian forces were working down through Asia Minor and Persia to coöperate with this British expedition. Bagdad was captured, without serious opposition, by General Maude on March 11, 1917, and, counting upon the expected junction with the Russian armies, it was thought that the German communications with the East would be cut in that region. The capture of Bagdad, in itself, was important for the British, as their prestige in the East had suffered from the first unlucky failure. If in addition a juncture had been made with the Rus-



sians, the German schemes in the East would have received a serious setback.

But, at the very time of these hopeful anticipations in Great Britain and the Allied countries, the Russian revolution suddenly broke out, and all Russia was paralyzed,<sup>1</sup> so far as any military efficiency was concerned. (The Czar abdicated March 15, 1917.) Not only was this revolution unexpected, but the gravity of the military situation created by it for the Entente Allies was not at first understood. This is explained by the fact that there was very little disturbance that attracted attention from the Allied countries. After a few days of rioting in the streets there was soon a semblance of an orderly government of the Russian people which misled the officials of the Allies, and many optimistically assumed that the revolution had been anti-German.

In the preceding year there had been a great deal of comment on the German influences at work upon the Russian Court and upon Russian officials, and the hope of the Allies was fostered by the thought that the popular uprising was against this element in Russia. The newly established régime was expected to do away with all this German influence and to give greater help to the military efforts of the Allies than had been provided by the Imperial Government of Russia. All this was very far from the facts, as was proved by the later course of events in Russia.

The short time that was sufficient to overthrow the existing government, and the comparatively small amount of disturbance, only meant the completeness of the revolution. This upheaval was not the result of politics, but it was brought about by widespread misery throughout the Russian people, which

<sup>1</sup> "The Russian revolution completely upset the Allied plan for a concerted offensive against the Central Powers on all fronts." War Cabinet Report, Year 1917.

had been the inevitable sequence of the unprecedented losses in men and material in the costly campaigns of 1915 and 1916. All Russia had been drained of resources to supply the endless demands of the Russian armies. Streams of men had gone forth, never to return, and the sustenance of their families had been diverted to the military needs. By the end of 1916 these conditions had passed all human endurance. There was famine everywhere in Russia.

The Duma had been summoned for February 27, 1917, and it began to debate the question of food supply in a city where crowds were pacing the streets asking for food. There was cold and snow, the crowds increased, and there began to be cases of looting. After a time troops were called in, but these Russian soldiers were in sympathy with the starving people and joined them as fast as they came into Petrograd. Soon the city was in possession of the mobs of populace and soldiers. The capture of the public buildings followed, and many of the police were killed; but there was no possibility of serious resistance, and when the Czar came to Petrograd, he was shown that there was no course left for him but to abdicate. This Nicholas did at once (March 15, 1917), and never was a revolution effected in a great nation with so little contest.

Yet all of the elements of a serious social revolution were present, and it was again to be shown that no orderly government could immediately follow such an overturn. In the French Revolution the extremists overthrew the first orderly attempts at government. In the same way, but in a much shorter time, the Russian extremists, the Reds, gained control.

It is no exaggeration to say that for months the Russian armies were debating societies, formulating and imposing rules and restrictions on orders for duty. All discipline was at an end, and the troops did not retain any semblance of respect or obedience for their

officers. In Petrograd there was for a time a semblance of an orderly government, with the Russian revolutionist Kerensky at its head. Kerensky was a man of great enthusiasm and magnetic personality. He made a strong impression abroad: his government was recognized by most of the Allied nations; and great things were expected of Russia under his leadership.

In July Kerensky went out to the Russian armies which still remained in Galicia, and by his personal appeals induced them again to take the offensive against the Austro-Germans in that region. This impulsive attack was astonishingly successful at first, helped by the surprise to the Austrians, who had not expected any activity in that sector. The Russians surged forward into Galicia, and for a while made great gains, including the capture of Halicz. But when Austro-German reinforcements were brought up against them, the Russian soldiers again became demoralized, many of them marching away from the battlefields without firing a shot. Their retreat was precipitate, and much more than the recent gains of the short-lived offensive were abandoned, including Stanislaw and Tarnopol. From this time the Russian army degenerated into a mob, and this last feverish offensive was the end of Russia as a military factor in the war.

The one favorable element remaining for the Entente Allies in the military situation in the East was the fact that the total collapse of the Russian military power was not appreciated at the time. The Central Powers felt that it was still necessary to maintain strong forces on the Russian front for the time being on account of the uncertainty of the Russian situation. It was felt that a repetition of the Kerensky offensive might take place at any moment. This necessity to keep troops to watch the Russians was of double value to the Entente Allies. They escaped for a time the discouragement that would have followed the knowledge

that all hopes of military help from Russia had passed. This would have been a severe blow to the morale of the Allies in the first half of 1917. The other more important military factor was the fact that keeping armies of the Central Powers on the Russian front prevented any great numbers of Austro-German troops from being sent to reinforce the Teutons on the Western and Italian fronts in the first half of 1917.

This was the only remnant of the great military power of Russia, a hollow mockery of threat, that never really existed, but to understand the campaigns of 1917 it must be realized that it was a long time before the Teutons dared to assume that the Russian armies had lost all powers of offensive. As a matter of fact things had gone from bad to worse in Russia, so far as the military situation was concerned. Yet the shadow of the former strength of the Russian armies still influenced the course of the war.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### MILITARY EVENTS ON THE WESTERN FRONT IN FIRST HALF OF 1917<sup>1</sup>

WITH the Russian revolution not yet developed to the extent that revealed the loss of the military aid of Russia, the commands of the Entente Allies naturally regarded the situation on the Western front as favorable for their projected offensives in the spring, which had been planned as an important part of the concerted Allied program for 1917. The British had made great preparations for an early offensive, and the end of the year 1916 had seen the final stamp of failure placed upon the German Battle of Verdun. In December, 1916, French counter attacks had won back so much of the German gains that the Verdun sector was no longer in danger, and French resources were relieved from the constant drain involved in its defense.

These French counter offensives at Verdun, which culminated in a brilliant surprise attack on December 15, 1916, were under the command of the French general, Nivelle, and they produced such an effect in France that the successful general was made Commander-in-Chief of the French armies. This was not only the result of General Nivelle's victories at Verdun, but it also came from a demand that had sprung up in France for a Command more inclined to the offensive. General Joffre became a Marshal of France, but ceased to have any control of the French armies.

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 18 at the end of Chapter 31.

General Nivelle had devised a far-reaching plan<sup>1</sup> for an offensive which he believed would inflict a decisive defeat upon the German armies, and this scheme won great favor among the French military leaders, who had been elated by the triumph over the German armies at Verdun. It was decided to prepare all the available French forces to carry out this plan, after the British had taken the initiative against the German positions which had resulted from the Battle of the Somme in the last half of 1916.

As explained in a previous chapter, many indentations had been made in the lines of intrenchments held by the Germans, and consequently parts of the German front were less advantageous for defense. The British had planned to make an assault upon these sectors, from Arras to Soissons, and again there were high hopes of breaking the German line.

Here a new and surprising situation developed, one of the most remarkable even in this war which had broken away from all precedent. Hindenburg and Ludendorff had anticipated that the British would attack in this region. They had decided that there was no military advantage in holding this salient with its many awkward positions for defense, and they had chosen a new series of positions behind the old line, practically straight and much stronger for defense. These positions were afterwards called the "Hindenburg Line."<sup>2</sup> The German Command had left detachments in the original trenches to keep up an appearance of defense, and the Germans had been able to move back their men, their guns, and all their material safely to the prepared new positions, before

<sup>1</sup> "In December, 1916, General Nivelle succeeded Marshal Joffre as Commander-in-Chief, and a new plan of campaign was adopted by the French." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>2</sup> Also called the "Siegfried Line" by the Germans. Ludendorff states that its construction was begun in September, 1916.

the attacks of the British had become serious enough to endanger this great movement.

That the Germans were able to make this unexpected withdrawal, on such a large scale and on a front of a hundred miles, with the air full of hostile airplanes, is another proof that aircraft have not put an end to the surprises in war. As explained in the chapter on warfare in the air, this great movement of troops and material could be screened by the constant movement going on backward and forward behind the lines, and advantage was taken of darkness and bad weather.<sup>1</sup> Even with these conditions to assist them, it is hard to understand how this great retreat was so successfully accomplished by the Germans, and it is needless to point out that attacks in force by the Allies would have been very dangerous to the Germans, if made at a critical stage of the withdrawal.

But this manoeuvre was not suspected, and the British offensive was started, as planned, against the thinly held German positions, from which the real defenders had been withdrawn. The advance of troops which followed naturally made great gains, and, as the advance went on, it soon became evident that the Germans were actually yielding terrain without forcing the penalty of heavy losses. This retreat was not understood at once, and, as objectives of the Somme battle fell into the hands of the British (Bapaume, Péronne, etc.), there was great exultation. It was thought to be the beginning of a general German retreat.

Suddenly the German resistance stiffened, as the new German defenses were encountered, and the British soon realized that the new German positions

<sup>1</sup> "The enemy's retirement at this juncture was greatly favored by the weather. . . . He was also materially assisted by a succession of misty days which greatly interfered with the work of our airplanes." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

were stronger than those which had been abandoned. The ground gained was only a desolate area of no definite military value. Cambrai and St. Quentin were still unattainable, and nothing had been accomplished toward dislocating the German armies.

Disconcerting as was this situation to the scheme of the Allied offensives, yet it was decided that the British would make a serious attempt to force the new German line and to carry out the project of an assault upon the Germans that would coöperate with the drive the French were about to undertake, as planned by General Nivelle. With this intention a heavy concentration of British artillery and infantry was made in the sector from Lens to St. Quentin. The British attacks, which were begun on April 9 and continued for weeks, were known as the Battle of Arras. There was desperate fighting, and at times there were conspicuous local successes which attracted much attention (Vimy Ridge, etc.), but again, as at the Battle of the Somme, the gains were at too great a cost. The essentials of the German positions were not conquered, but the British losses were so great that before the end of May this series of actions had faded away into tactics of attrition.<sup>1</sup>

When the British Battle of Arras had been developed, and the defense had involved strong German forces, General Nivelle began his ambitious offensive (April 16, 1916). The first move was a sudden attack between Soissons and Rheims.<sup>2</sup> The initial French success was spectacular, as seventeen thousand prisoners and seventy-five guns were taken in three days. But persevering in the struggle did not win anything of importance; when the balance of

<sup>1</sup> "On the other hand, the strengthening of the enemy's forces opposite my front necessarily brought about for the time being the characteristics of a wearing-out battle." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>2</sup> Second Battle of the Aisne.



gains and losses was struck, the French losses were found so heavy<sup>1</sup> in proportion to the gains that there was a great reaction in France. The battle had been a test of the plan of General Nivelle, and he had only been able to make a poor showing for his theories.

So evident was this that there was a crisis in France, which brought about a consultation of the French ministers. On May 15 General Nivelle was relieved, and the command of the French armies in the field was given to General Pétain, the well-tried defender of Verdun. At the same time General Foch was made Chief of the French General Staff.

In these battles the Allies had experienced the strength of the new German defense developed by the Hindenburg-Ludendorff Command after the lessons of the Battle of the Somme. "The construction of positions in the West was systematically revised, from the point of view of the new theory of deep organizations of all positions. . . . In sharp contrast to the form of defense hitherto employed, which had concentrated in regular and easily recognizable lines, a broad defense was now organized in deep formations, mobile and handled in loose groups."<sup>2</sup> This was the so-called "Elastic Defense" of the Germans. A drive into these positions gained ground, but the assailants were at a great disadvantage, unless they had penetrated in a very wide front. All gains on a narrow front were practically smothered. This system of defense had also probably decreased the German losses in proportion to those of the assailants. The new German tactics enjoined by the Hindenburg Operation Order, the "Defensive Fighting" order, made this defense effective. So evident was this double disadvantage to the Allies that the Battle of Arras was not prolonged, as had been the case at the Battle of the Somme.

<sup>1</sup> French losses about 100,000.

<sup>2</sup> "Ludendorff's Own Story."

It must be admitted that the great withdrawal of the German armies to their new strong positions was a skilful manoeuvre, and, for the time being, it had put an end to the Allied hopes of an offensive that would break the German line on the Western front.<sup>1</sup> The Germans had certainly yielded ground, and to this extent there had been a gain for the Allies, but the strength of the new German defense had been so quickly shown that the loss of territory did not have much moral effect upon the Germans or upon the French. It was soon seen that the Allies had not won tactical results that would influence the course of the war, except again the wear and tear inflicted upon the German armies.

Both sides settled down to trench warfare,<sup>2</sup> without attempts to force a decision; but on one sector of the British front an operation was carried out that had been in preparation for a long time. Just south of Ypres there was a salient held by the Germans, which included the towns of Messines and Wytschaete (Messines Ridge). For many months a great series of mines had been worked out by the British under the German positions on this salient. This work had been persevered in until a million pounds of high explosives were in position to blow up the German intrenchments.

Preparations were completed on June 7, and on that day the great mine was detonated, and this German salient was blotted out of existence. An assault by British troops had been planned to follow the explosion, but this was on too small a scale to win extensive results. The advance of the British was soon halted. The local success had been attained, and the German

<sup>1</sup> "In adopting this course the enemy's aim was to derange our plan of attack for the Spring, to avoid battle as long as possible . . . to give time for the submarine campaign to take effect." War Cabinet Report.

<sup>2</sup> "The so-called stabilized and trench warfare." Memorandum Army Service Schools, August 12, 1919.

salient had been won, — an interesting comment on the high cost of this war, where one million pounds of high explosives backed by several divisions of troops had won merely a local success.<sup>1</sup>

There is no question of the fact that the continued warfare on the Western front, with the Entente Allies usually on the offensive, and winning only local successes at enormous cost, was producing a position of stalemate. With the exception of the time of the first stage of the German offensive against Verdun, the Allies had possessed a numerical superiority.<sup>2</sup> Yet constant effort had only shown that they could not devise tactics to break the German line. The German positions had swayed back at times, and the great withdrawal of the German armies had been made, but no dislocation of the German armies had ever followed.

The strain upon the armies of the Allies from these constant efforts and constant losses began to be apparent at the end of the first half of 1917. There was no longer anything in sight that promised to win a decision against the Germans on the Western front. The German battle line from Switzerland to the sea was still unimpaired, in spite of all the assaults that had been made upon it. The fighting had become a matter of sticking to a task that had been reduced to an effort for attrition.<sup>2</sup> This was the outstanding phase of the military situation on the Western front at the middle of the year 1917, a deadlock that was a fearful drain upon both sides.

Upon the armies of the Allies the effects of these failures were more serious at this time. The reaction

<sup>1</sup> Battle of Messines Ridge.

<sup>2</sup> "The resulting weakness of the two opposing lines threatened to prolong for some time to come what has been called the war of attrition — that struggle of unmarked and unsustained advantages, which wears out both armies without bringing gain to either — a war without result." Marshal Foch, Introduction to "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

from Allied hopes of success for their offensives had a far-reaching effect.<sup>1</sup> With this bad military situation<sup>2</sup> on the Western front, with Russia in collapse, and the Italians unable to make gains, and with the submarine campaign at its worst, the fortunes of the Allies were at a low ebb when the United States began preparations to take an active part in the war.

<sup>1</sup> "The failure caused a serious reaction, especially in French morale both in the army and throughout the country, and attempts to carry out extensive or combined operations were indefinitely suspended." General Pershing. Report.

<sup>2</sup> "The battles of Arras, Soissons and Rheims raged on for weeks. It revealed only one tactical variation from the conflict on the Somme in the previous year, a variation I must not forget to mention. After the first few days our adversaries won not a single success worth mentioning, and after a few weeks they sank back exhausted on the battlefield and resumed trench warfare. So our defense measures had proved themselves brilliantly after all." Hindenburg, "Out of My Life."



## CHAPTER XXVIII

## THE ITALIAN FRONT, 1917

## THE ITALIAN REVERSES

To follow the trend of the military events of 1917 it is necessary to turn to the Italian front. In this region there existed the only other possibility of an offensive that might disturb the advantageous military position of the Central Powers. Although the Italians had not been able to follow up their victory at Gorizia by making any material advance on the Isonzo sector in 1916, they had made great preparations for renewing the attack in the spring of 1917 against the strong defenses which the difficult country had made available for the Austrians, after the loss of Gorizia.

In May, 1917, the Italians again attempted a general offensive on the Isonzo positions. Again there were local successes at first, but the Austrian positions were too strong and not much was accomplished. The first part of the summer was passed in preparations for another effort on a greater scale, and in August the Italians undertook their most ambitious offensive of the war along the whole Isonzo front from Canale in the north. Their tactics were to attack the mountain positions of the Austrians north of Gorizia, and at the same time thrust forward against the Austrian wing near the sea.

This new Italian offensive won successes at once, especially against the mountain positions on the Austrian right, and the Italian armies made good

advances in these portions of the Julian Alps. The total of Austrian prisoners grew to twenty-five thousand, and the Italian enthusiasm for the war was rekindled. Italy was again thought to be on the way to great victories, but the delay had been too long, the Italian preparations had taken too much time, and the progress of the Italians in the mountains was not rapid enough to dislocate the Austrian armies before reinforcements came to their aid, and these could be provided in consequence of conditions on the Eastern front.

In the fall of 1917 the Russian situation was very different from that in the first part of the year. The Russian armies had disintegrated to such an extent that the Central Powers were perfectly safe in withdrawing troops from the armies opposing the Russians. Large forces of Austro-Germans, with a strong equipment of heavy artillery, were consequently gathered to use against the Italians. This was one of the great concentrations of the war, and it was planned to defeat the Italian armies by using the same tactics that had been used by the Teutons in the East.

These great preparations were unsuspected by the Italian Command. Seldom has a general been so confident of the safety of his campaign as was General Cadorna in the fall of 1917. His armies had been winning positions in the mountains, and at each advance there was the assumption that the gain was permanent, with others to follow. Not only was the Italian general supremely confident of the strength of his armies and ignorant of the great force which was being massed against him, but he had allowed a serious defect to exist in the position of his armies.

As Cadorna's troops advanced in the mountains, a thinly held sector had been allowed to grow into an actual gap between his armies in the region of Tolmino. Against this weak point the great Austro-German mass of artillery and infantry was directed, and the

dreams of conquest of the Italian general were suddenly scattered by a Hindenburg drive, which was as much of a surprise as those earlier in the war (Caporetto, October 24, 1917). There had been no provision against anything of the kind, no "positions previously prepared." The Italians were driven out of their lines and lost their conquests of two and a half years



No. 19. THE ITALIAN REVERSES.

(1) Austro-German drive (The Caporetto), which caused the collapse of the Italian armies and their retreat beyond the Piave.

Line of the Piave and the Asiago Plateau, to which the Italian armies retreated.

(2) Austro-German attacks in the mountains.  
(This map is diagrammatic only.)

in as many weeks, with two hundred and fifty thousand prisoners and two thousand guns. Not only this, but the drive continued far into Venetia.

The first reports of these overwhelming reverses implied demoralization of the Italian armies from socialistic propaganda, but on November 23 there appeared in the French Premier Clemenceau's paper, *L'Homme*

*Libre*, an article, which may almost be considered official, evidently intended to give the real Italian military situation to the French people.

The following is quoted from this article:

"Let us consider the military aspect of the Italian situation. To begin with, the principal error of the Italian high command—alone sufficient to bring about the catastrophe—was the faulty disposition of its armies. The Second Army, after crossing the Isonzo, was drawn up facing northward on the high mountains Monte Nero, and Vrich, without having reached the crests, which were still in possession of the enemy. The Third Army, on the other hand, had conquered the crests and held Cucco, Monte Santo, and Vodice. It faced eastward and had advanced across the Bainsizza Plateau toward Laibach. But between these two armies the Austrians still held a whole sector which formed from Tolmino to Santa Lucia a kind of outpost separating the Italian forces."

"Military critics had already drawn attention to the danger of this situation and pointed out that the strategic arrangements of both Italian armies might be thrown into confusion by the enemy if the latter, holding the intermediate high ground, should decide to attack on both sides with sufficient forces. That is precisely what happened when the Germans were able to transfer part of their troops from Russia to the Italian Alps."

"The second error: Behind these armies, drawn up in so perilous a position, there were at least reserves ready in case of a surprise. In May, 1916, in the course of the Austrian offensive in the Trentino, General Cadorna had profited by a moment of respite to constitute the Fifth Army a reserve. It was the intervention of this force at the critical moment that forced the enemy to retreat. For reasons that we are unable to understand, this Fifth Army was dissolved



one fine day: Not that man power was wanting; it was and still is plentiful in Italy. The reserves of man power were numerous enough to furnish other armies as well. But the Italian Generalissimo has always seemed unwilling to keep them near the front. So, when need came, they could not intervene, and thus the rout of the Second Army, followed by the beating up and precipitate retreat of the Third, carried everything away. . . .

"This error is connected with several others, all of which are to be explained by blind confidence in the solidity of the conquests made. Otherwise, what excuse is there for the mistake of massing all the main supply depots at so short a distance from the front, between Isonzo and the Tagliamento? To take the case of wheat alone: More than 300,000 tons thus fell into the hands of the famished enemy."

"How, too, are we to excuse the complete lack of intrenchments, in view of a possible retreat, and the fact that not a single road of retreat was prepared, or a single bridge—beyond five old ones—thrown across the Tagliamento? The congestion produced almost from the outset by the enormous mass of men and material on the river banks, all trying to cross at the same moment, cost the Italian Army almost as dearly as the sudden loss of all its supply sources which had to be left to the enemy."

This was another case of a surprise concentration of great bodies of troops and artillery undetected by the airplane scouts, all the more notable because the Italian aircraft service was known to be very efficient.

The broken Italian forces were compelled to retreat far into Venetia. It was hopeless to attempt to make a stand on the Tagliamento, and the Italians were withdrawn beyond the River Piave, where the wide marshes protected their right. The Italian troops which had been operating against the Trentino were

swung back in alignment, so that the new left of the Italian armies was placed on the Asiago plateau in strong mountainous positions. With their right behind the Piave and their left so strongly held, the battered Italian armies were safe from any serious danger.

Seldom has there been so complete an overturn as in this short campaign, from October 24 to the second week in November. A supposedly victorious army, advancing into an enemy's territory where it had been operating for two years and a half, had been suddenly overwhelmed and driven far back into its own territory, with so great losses of men, guns, and material that its power for the offensive had been destroyed. Instead of being a menace to the Central Powers, the Italian armies had to be first safeguarded in a defensive position, and then reorganized and provided with guns and material. Naturally General Cadorna was immediately superseded in the command, and General Diaz became the new Commander-in-Chief of the Italian armies.

In the extremity of this utter defeat Italy appealed for help to Great Britain and France. To this appeal both nations responded after an agreement for "unity of control" had been reached.<sup>1</sup> Before this Italy had acted independently, so far as any military policy was concerned. The nation had pursued its own objects and conducted its own military campaigns. By the creation of the new Allied War Council the operations of the British, French, and Italian armies were for the first time coördinated.

Reinforcements were sent to Italy and measures were taken to strengthen the Italians in guns and materials, to replace what had been lost in their terrible retreat. The Austro-German drive had trans-

<sup>1</sup> ". . . the Rapallo agreement. This agreement provided for the formation of a Supreme War Council of the Allies." War Cabinet Report.

formed Italy from a military assistant to the Allies into a new drain upon their resources. This expresses the importance of the results won by the Austro-Germans in the Caporetto offensive.

The Allied War Council was still far away from a united military command, which was the one greatest need of the Allies. As had been shown in the conduct of the war, it was not alone the central position that gave the Central Powers their greatest advantage. It was a united military control that could command all the Teutonic resources at need. Throughout the war the Allies had not possessed this great advantage of centralized military control. Many of their operations had been arranged in concert and carried out in coöperation, but too often the campaigns of the Allies had been isolated efforts, which the Central Powers had been able to overcome in detail. The new War Council did not imply one recognized military command, but it was a step in the right direction, and it prepared the way for the creation of a Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies who would control their operations.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE EFFORT OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE WAR

THE United States had soon realized that a great task confronted the nation in the war. This was brought home to the people by the pressing demands for assistance that were made upon our country by the Governments of the Entente Allies. Shortly after our declaration of war a special mission was sent to America by the Allies to explain the needs of the war-weary nations that were fighting the Central Powers.<sup>1</sup> Marshal Joffre and Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, were with this mission, which was cordially received in the United States.

The United States did not, at this time or at any other time, enter upon any alliance with the Entente Allies. This should be understood, to correct the prevailing impression that the United States has been one of the Allies. All the traditions of the nation were against entangling alliances, and none was made, but the United States pledged all its resources to be used in fighting against Germany in coöperation with the Entente Allies. This distinction must be remembered, as defining the status of the United States in the war.<sup>2</sup>

As has been said, the immediate action of Congress had shown that the nation was united in the prosecution

<sup>1</sup> "What a dark moment that was in the history of the Allied cause! Not only were the German submarines sweeping British commerce from the seas, but the Germans were also defeating the British and French armies in France." Admiral Sims, *The World's Work*.

<sup>2</sup> The wording of the Peace Treaty is: "Allied and Associated Powers."



of the war, and the far-reaching measures passed in the first month after the entrance of the United States were guarantees that a great effort was to be made by the American people. The differences of opinion in Congress were forgotten, and all the effects of German influence and German propaganda were swept aside. With this unity of effort came unity of control, and the resources of the country were mobilized under the United States Government for use in the great crisis of war. The railroads, telegraphs, and telephones were put under government control, and the Administration was given power to supervise the industrial and food products of the country.

It was the realization of this imminent crisis in the fight against the inordinate ambitions of Germany that called forth the full strength of our country. All doubts had been removed as to the objects of Germany, and it was equally plain that Germany would win these objects unless the whole power of the United States was put forth. This aroused spirit made the entrance of our nation a greater help in the war than even a much earlier participation would have been, before our people had thus become united against Germany. It had become evident that the assistance required by the Entente Allies would comprise:

Financial aid,  
Supplies,  
A military force.

In each of these necessary factors for maintaining the war against Germany the Entente Allies were becoming exhausted. In the matter of providing financial aid and foodstuffs for the Allies it had been assumed that the United States would render great assistance, but expert military opinion abroad did not believe our country would be able to furnish a strong military force in time to have an effect upon the war.

Yet this last factor, a strong army from the United States, was the one essential that was required to avert defeat from the Allies. To provide this necessary military reinforcement became the greatest task of the United States. This was providentially accomplished, contrary to all military opinion, and the United States Army eventually was the deciding factor in the war.<sup>1</sup>

The financial problem of the United States was twofold, because it comprised not only furnishing great loans to the Allies but also providing for the enormous expenditures necessary to carry on a war of unprecedented cost, and of which the cost was multiplied for our nation by the desperate need of haste. This increased cost of our preparations was justified by the event, as our help was barely in time to save the exhausted Allies.

The large sums necessary for this double drain on the country's finances were raised by a series of issues of bonds taken by popular subscription throughout the country. In this case popular subscription meant that the people really subscribed for the bonds. A wise policy was followed of allotting a proportionate part of each bond issue to every community in the country. Each city or town knew the amount of its subscription, and local pride was aroused, to score for the locality, and to do its part in the conduct of the war. By this means the success of each of the loans was notable, — and the financial part of our country's task at home and abroad was never in jeopardy.

Providing assistance to the Allies in the matter of supplies, of which the most important were foodstuffs, also meant apportioning the use of these products of the country between the needs of the situation

<sup>1</sup>“... the influence which the sending of the fighting forces of the United States had upon the outcome of the war. America thus became the decisive power in the war.” Ludendorff.

abroad and the needs of the unusual situation which had been created in this country. Herbert C. Hoover was given extraordinary powers as Federal Food Administrator, and the result accomplished by Hoover and his associates was one of the notable achievements of the war. After his good work in the administration of the Belgian Relief Commission, Hoover was the logical man for the place, and his greatest success consisted in the effect of his personality upon the country. His name became a household word in America, as a potent influence not only for producing food but for thrift in saving foodstuffs. Like the issues of the war bonds the policies of the Food Administration came home to each community, and the great work involving billions of dollars had its roots in every town in the country.

Leading men from our various industrial organizations placed their services at the disposal of the Government at great personal sacrifice, and, as a result, the different branches of the new activities of the United States were soon under the direction of recognized experts. This was a very great benefit, as all these undertakings were on an unprecedented scale.

In our industries, necessary to produce supplies of all kinds, it should be kept in mind that, at the time of our entrance into the war, the United States possessed an advantage which is not generally understood. In this important matter of industrial expansion for enormous quantities of supplies, equipment, and munitions, we did not have to contend with the handicap that in ordinary circumstances would beset a great peaceful nation suddenly surprised by a war. Although we had not been in the war, our country had really gained an industrial preparedness in the years the war had been going on. This situation existed because the needs of the Allies for supplies of

all kinds had already stimulated our industries, and our factories had been equipped to supply war material in great quantities long before there was any question of our own needs. Consequently, instead of being unprepared, our industries could begin to produce greater quantities at once.

Through the work of the United States Railroad Administration, the transportation of the country was unified, and so organized that the first call upon the railroads was for delivering these supplies, throughout the country and at the terminal ports for transportation overseas. This was an important part of the use of our resources. The uninterrupted transportation of troops was also assured.

Using these means, and with these advantages, the first two items of our great undertaking did not present unsurmountable difficulties. Even the enormous task of equipping our forces, both of the Army and Navy, could be accomplished by the help of arrangements with the Allies for giving and taking material. It was the actual production of our armies that was thought impossible,<sup>1</sup> and no history would give a true impression of the war, if it did not emphasize the fact that a military impossibility was accomplished by the United States when two million men were landed in France.<sup>2</sup>

It must be bluntly stated that, in every military sense, we were unprepared, and this retarded everything at the start. We should resolve never again to permit such a situation. For a time, it looked as if all European prophecies as to our military helplessness would prove true. Then from delays and confusion

<sup>1</sup> "... the fact that General Headquarters, like everyone else, had not thought it possible that these enormous numbers of American troops could be brought to Europe." Von Tirpitz. "My Memoirs."

<sup>2</sup> "... those hordes of American troops on the continent which turned the balance against us on the western front in 1918." Von Tirpitz. "My Memoirs."



emerged the miracle, the army and navy forces of the United States, which turned the scale of the war.

The foundation of the success of the attempt to raise an American army in time to be a factor in the war lay also in its immediate appeal to each community. Conscription in the United States, instead of being a last resort after voluntary enlistment had failed, was a first direct appeal to each town and city to do its share in the war. It was, as its name implied, really a selective service. Each district of each community had its local board, with the power to decide upon those eligible for the draft. The good results of this system were seen in the operation of the act. It had been promptly passed in May. The registration day was June 5, 1917, and the total number enrolled in this first call upon the manhood of the United States was over nine and a half million.

Contrary to the prophecies, and in spite of a great deal of German propaganda to create trouble, there were practically no disturbances in the registration, nor in the subsequent drafting of troops under the act. It was very different from the ordinary operation of conscription, and the feeling was not prevalent among the drafted men that they were being forced into an unwelcome task. Instead of this, the recruits evidently felt that they were representing their communities in the war, and that, by not claiming exemption, they were doing their share willingly. This insured the right spirit throughout the enlisted personnel of the new National Army created by the draft. There was also a fine personnel in the National Guard, which had been Federalized.

Our most valuable military asset was our Regular Army, which was a highly organized force of picked men. The officers of the Regular Army were well schooled in their profession, and soon made their influence felt throughout the new levies, among which

they were scattered. As Grant said in the Civil War of the Regular officers who had gone home to their State troops, "The whole loaf was leavened."<sup>1</sup>

Most fortunately there were no premature attempts to hurry bodies of men into France. To make an American army, and to land the full strength of this great army in France became the task the country had set for itself. The one exception was the division of American troops which was hurried overseas in June, 1917, for moral effect in France.

Taking pattern from American schemes of industries on a large scale, the very practical plan was followed of making the plants for producing troops before trying to force the production of troops. The country was divided into districts in proportion to the men who would be forthcoming for the Army, and in all these districts great cantonments of standardized buildings were built and equipped, to receive and train the men for war service. In these cantonments the new recruits received their intensive training under the best of conditions for health, and from the first it was evident that the United States Army would comprise a personnel of unusual adaptability for military service.

By the fall of 1917 these cantonments were in active operation, and officers and men were alike working at their tasks with a zeal and unity of purpose that transformed them into soldiers in an incredibly short time. From these camps the steadily increasing stream of troops began to flow, which became so great a flood as the months passed by. These great cantonments became very efficient in handling and training large bodies of men. Nothing of the kind had ever been done before on such a scale, and new methods of administration grew up from the experience of handling the new machinery.

<sup>1</sup> General U. S. Grant. "Personal Memoirs."

It is merely a simple statement of fact to say that in these camps the methods of making armies were revolutionized. At first the men were trained in the usual way in the regularly organized units of divisions, but in the dire emergency of 1918 the men were quickly classified, and given the first essentials of training by using many of the cantonments as great replacement camps. From these camps men were sent as casualties to fill ranks of Army units.

Perhaps equally epoch-making was the work done in France by the United States Government to prepare for the landing and administration of the American Expeditionary Force. There had never been an undertaking approaching this difficult problem of raising the American Army and delivering it over so great a distance, as a military factor upon the battlefields of France. Fortunately it had been realized that there were two corollaries of the problem necessary for the right solution: Terminals with administrative machinery in France; A scheme of continuous transportation over the ocean. These two essential factors were provided.

At the same time that the great plants for producing the army were being put into operation in the United States, the great plants for receiving and administering the American Expeditionary Force were being constructed in France. Extensive terminals, warehouses, and railroads were built by American engineers, and when our troops arrived, with the rush of great numbers necessary to meet the emergency of 1918, the War Department had installed in France an equipment that was prepared to handle the troops, to deliver them ready for battle wherever needed, and to furnish them with supplies. In no other way could the American Expeditionary Force have rendered its timely assistance.

The German military leaders could not realize that by these means the administration of the American

Expeditionary Force had been assured; that it was no temporary burst of speed, but that the Americans would grow stronger as time went on. The comment of the disappointed Ludendorff described "bringing over the American masses, crammed tight in transports, to France. The men carried only their personal equipments. . . . The whole operation was a *tour de force*, uncommonly effective for a short time, but impossible to maintain for a long period. Had the war lasted longer a reaction must have followed. . . . Ruthlessness and energy once again brought success."<sup>1</sup> The very fact that Ludendorff could not conceive it was possible to supply the American Expeditionary Force was an involuntary tribute from this most resourceful European soldier.

The other necessary corollary of the military plan, the transportation of the large numbers of troops across the Atlantic, was an all-important major naval operation of the war, and an account of it will be given in the next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> "Ludendorff's Own Story."



## CHAPTER XXX

## THE WAR ON THE SEA, 1917

ON the sea in 1917 two great problems confronted the Entente Allies and the United States. The first was the question of overcoming the new unrestricted use of the German submarines. The second was the difficult task of transporting the American troops across the Atlantic. The second problem really depended upon a solution of the first, the U-boat question. If the submarines had not been a menace, the transportation of our armies would have been merely a matter of providing a large number of ships, as the Allies had absolute control of the surface of the sea. But suddenly there had appeared a factor which threatened the Allied control of the seas in its most important province at that stage of the war, — transportation of supplies and men over the seas. Consequently there was double necessity to defeat the new submarine campaign of Germany.

The Germans had begun their well-prepared campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, and there is no question of the fact that the use of illegal methods by the German U-boats was immediately so successful that the Allies had to face one of the worst situations of the war.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the navies of the Allies were taken by surprise, and for a time they were unable to make headway against the unexpected resources developed by the U-boats.

<sup>1</sup> "It is impossible for us to go on with the war if losses like this continue." Admiral Jellicoe to Admiral Sims. *The World's Work*.

As has been said, one reason for this situation was the fact that earlier methods used against the U-boat offensives had been credited with undue success,<sup>1</sup> and the halt in the German submarine campaign had been attributed to the failure of the U-boats, when in reality it had been stopped by the demands of the United States. Instead of being failures, the submarines had been constantly developed and improved by the Germans, and the cynical casting away of all humane considerations had given these improved craft a great power for harm against carrying ships on the high seas.

The rate of sinkings of merchantmen increased so alarmingly that there was another crisis in Great Britain, and there was a complete overturn in the Admiralty. Eventually Sir Eric Geddes became First Lord. Under his energetic control there was an awakening to the dangers of the situation, and the best efforts of the British Navy were concentrated to overcome the menace of the submarine.

The first operation of the United States Navy after the declaration of war was to coöperate with the campaign against the submarine. On May 4, 1917, a detachment of our destroyers was in European waters, and, even before our declaration of war, Admiral Sims, the President of the Naval War College, had been sent to England to act as Representative of our Navy with the Allies. Outside of the assistance of the destroyers, the arrival of the Americans was a great stimulus to the British Navy, and it is well known that the influence of the United States Navy was exerted in favor of the convoy system, which in the end was proved to be the best defense against the submarines. In spite of the advocacy of the convoying system by

<sup>1</sup> "The stories that were being published concerning the numerous sinkings of German submarines I now found to be untrue." Admiral Sims, *The World's Work*.

many British naval experts, convoying had not been looked upon with much favor by the British Navy, but under the new régime in the British Admiralty it was widely adopted to protect carrying ships against submarines.<sup>1</sup>

Arming the merchantmen had of course done a certain amount of good, and a large number of merchantmen had been armed by the United States, but this did not result in a defense that could be relied upon in all circumstances, as the improved German submarines carried very good guns, and there were many cases of well-armed merchantmen overcome by the gunfire of the formerly vulnerable U-boats in battles on the surface of the ocean. Unexpected courses, evasions, concealment in smoke, and, above all things, speed proved of value in escaping the submarines. The system of convoying was the best defense of all, and in the end was more relied upon than anything else.

The foundation for the success of the convoy was the condition that it imposed upon the submarine of operating practically in a danger zone whenever it attempted to attack the convoyed ships. It was compelled to make its attacks in the presence of naval units, which were able to dominate the U-boat and drive it below the surface. The destroyer was the best type of naval craft for this purpose, and the value of the destroyer has been widely recognized in this war. It could dominate the submarine by gunfire, it had great speed, and it was ready to drop a depth bomb, which was one of the most effective offensives devised against the U-boat. These bombs contained heavy charges of high explosives, which caused a shock, when exploded under water, sufficient to rack anything in a wide radius.

<sup>1</sup> "A new feature of the means adopted for the protection of trade against submarines has been a return to the convoy system as practised in bygone wars." War Cabinet Report.

Consequently it will be understood that a convoy of carrying ships, although it sacrificed a certain amount of speed, was always in a position where the submarine could only attack at great risk to itself. With the limitations of the U-boat when forced to keep below the surface by a superior enemy, the increased difficulty of observations, and the constant danger of attack by the escorts, it can be seen that the convoy put the submarine at a great disadvantage, and the system of convoying was founded upon sound principles.

It must not be thought that the new German submarine offensive was easily or quickly overcome. On the contrary it was only by the greatest efforts that any advantage was gained over the submarines. At times in the spring and early summer the situation was very grave indeed. In these months shipping was vanishing at a rate that could not be replaced.<sup>1</sup> Gradually the precautions that were being taken reduced the totals of sinkings, and in six months they were practically halved. It was more a matter of system and care than of any definite cure. In fact no panacea against the submarine was ever discovered among the many devices that were tried. Many inventions were of benefit, notably the various systems for detecting the presence of the U-boats, but nothing really ever ended the danger from them. Never was eternal vigilance more necessary than against the submarine.

It was at the very height of this dangerous campaign that it first became necessary to transport American troops across the ocean. As has been said, it was thought necessary to land an advance guard of the American army in France as soon as possible, for the moral effect upon the French nation, to serve as a visible guarantee of the military assistance of the United

<sup>1</sup> "536,000 tons in February, 603,000 in March, and that sinkings were taking place in April which indicated the destruction of nearly 900,000 tons." Admiral Sims, *The World's Work*.



States which was to follow. By the end of July, about twenty-nine thousand American soldiers had been transported overseas, and their presence had a marked effect upon the French people. Of these first troops about twenty-five thousand were convoyed by the United States Navy, and twenty thousand were taken across in American ships.

General John J. Pershing had been sent in advance to command the American Expeditionary Force, and the American Commander-in-Chief at once, through his personality and good judgment, gained an influence with the leaders of the Allies that steadily increased and became a strong element in the conduct of the war.

Following these first shipments of troops, the work of transporting the United States Army went on steadily in increasing volume, as the men were turned out by the cantonments after their intensive training. This program ashore of producing the personnel for the American Expeditionary Force was being carried out systematically, and the necessary sequence of the process of sending out troops so rapidly, in large numbers, also called for the transportation of troops by sea on a scale that had never been attempted before. This became the one all-important operation of the United States Navy, and it demanded a corresponding increase to carry it out. For the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, of which Admiral William S. Benson was the head, this task overshadowed all other things, and the problem was threefold, involving the Cruiser and Transport Force, the Naval Transportation Service, and the greatly increased Atlantic Fleet, of which Admiral Henry T. Mayo was Commander-in-Chief.

With the British Navy and the other navies of the Allies occupied in the effort to master the submarines, it was clear that the bulk of the convoying of the

United States troops across the Atlantic must be done by the United States Navy. It was also evident that, although British shipping was the natural means of transportation on any large scale, the demands of the war had been so great, and the British losses from sinkings had been so unexpectedly large, that it was also necessary to transport as great a proportion of the American troops as possible in American ships. These were difficult problems for a nation that had not possessed a large amount of shipping before the war.<sup>1</sup>

To solve these problems, and to carry out this part of the task, the Cruiser and Transport Force of the United States Navy was organized under the command of Rear Admiral Albert Gleaves.<sup>2</sup> From almost nothing at the start ships were quickly assembled and equipped for this service. A large number of these were the German steamships<sup>3</sup> which had been in American ports during the war. These the German crews had attempted to disable by wrecking their machinery, etc., but they were soon repaired and used for our transport service. To show the magnitude of the operations of the Cruiser and Transport Force, performed at the times of great danger from submarine attacks, it is sufficient to state that the force grew to twenty-four cruisers and forty-two transports, manned by about three thousand officers and forty-two thousand men, and this Cruiser and Transport Force carried to Europe over nine hundred thousand men, without the loss of a single soldier by the hand of the enemy.

To transport overseas the great amount of supplies

<sup>1</sup> "Joffre in an interview with the Secretary of War in May, 1917, said that he thought that 400,000 would be our limit, and that one French port would be sufficient to receive them. How amazed he would have been could he have looked into the crystal and seen what this country transported to France in men and material during the next eighteen months." Vice Admiral Gleaves. "Moving Our Troops Overseas."

<sup>2</sup> Later Vice Admiral Gleaves.

<sup>3</sup> The *Leviathan* (German *Vaterland*) alone transported to Europe 192,750 American troops.

and material necessary for the American Expeditionary Force, the Naval Overseas Transportation Service was organized, and at the time of the armistice this force had grown to three hundred and forty-seven ships, with one hundred and six additional ships ready to be taken over, as a result of the successful building program of the Federal Shipping Board. The Transportation Service had a personnel at this time of five thousand officers and forty-five thousand men. The Ship Control Committee, of which P. A. S. Franklin was the head, had charge of loading the cargo and securing the quick turn-around of the ships. There was a representative at each port in use, and these men did most effective work.

It was found that, although our deep-sea merchant fleet was small, we possessed a personnel of seamen in our coastwise and interior shipping of great intelligence and adaptability. Working in coöperation with the United States Navy, these men of the American Merchant Marine made possible the successful operation of the newly created forces. The same element also made it possible to operate the enormously increased Atlantic Fleet, which the situation made necessary.

Admiral Mayo was in command of the Atlantic Fleet throughout the organization of its increased force, and until the successful completion of its great task in safeguarding the transportation of our army and its supplies to Europe. It would be well to state other totals here to fix the magnitude of the operation in the reader's mind. In all 2,086,000<sup>1</sup> were transported overseas. Of this total 1,720,000<sup>1</sup> were convoyed by the United States Navy without the loss of a man by an enemy's act. There is no need to add anything to this bare statement of figures, except to repeat that there was no precedent in history for such

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Review, Ayers.

an undertaking over such a distance, — and success was thought to be impossible. Yet it was accomplished by the combined efforts of the Atlantic Fleet, the Cruiser and Transportation Force, and the Naval Transportation Service.

When it is realized how important the success of this great operation was in its effect upon the course of the war, and also the constant danger from the German submarines which menaced its execution, it is safe to say that the year 1917 saw the inception and the able conduct of the decisive major naval operation of the war.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The United States Army in France was a decisive factor in obtaining speedy victory. The transportation of this army overseas under naval protection was, therefore, a major operation of first importance." Vice Admiral Gleaves. "Moving Our Troops Overseas."



## CHAPTER XXXI

MILITARY EVENTS OF THE LAST HALF OF  
1917<sup>1</sup>

## THE WESTERN FRONT. THE ITALIAN FRONT

THE grave crisis on the seas, brought about by the successes of the German U-boat, had an important influence upon the military operations on land in the last half of the 1917 campaign. As the seriousness of the submarine danger developed, the value of the Belgian coast to the Germans became apparent. Earlier in the war, in the exultation at keeping the Germans from Calais, the strategic value of this strip of coastline as a base for the Germans had not been realized. But by the middle of 1917 Zeebrugge began to assume large proportions as a tactical objective. It was evident that this port and Ostend were being utilized as bases for submarines, and it was decided to make a drive in Flanders with the object of forcing back the German line, and obliging the Germans to give up these Channel ports.

As has been stated, the offensive of the British in the Battle of Arras had been unable to make much impression upon the new German positions into which Hindenburg had withdrawn his army, and with the complete failure of General Nivelle's offensive, the Allied attacks had died away at the end of the first half of 1917. Yet the Allies still had a numerical superiority, and they were also strong in artillery.

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 18 at the end of this chapter.

In spite of the ill success of the Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Arras in winning decisive results, it was believed that the Allies had established sufficient superiority to force the Germans back at any given point.

There had been gains in both battles, although they had been at great cost and had not dislocated the German armies. If similar gains could be made in Flanders, the withdrawal of the German line in this sector, which was so near the coast, would make the Channel coast untenable. The British Command had every confidence that it would be possible to push back the Germans in this region, and such an operation would have been well worth a high cost if it had succeeded in forcing the Germans to evacuate the Belgian coast. The German occupation of this strip along the Channel had always been a menace to Great Britain, and in 1917 German possession of Ostend and Zeebrugge had become a part of the dangerous attack upon the sea power of the Allies by means of the German submarines.

With the object of driving the Germans from these bases, preparations were made for an offensive in Flanders,<sup>1</sup> and French troops were sent over to this sector to reinforce the British. Ever since their advance along the Belgian coast in 1914 the Germans had held fast to the positions where their line of defenses stretched to the sea at the mouth of the Yser, north of Nieuport. In fact the only change on this sector had been a surprise attack by the Germans (July 10, 1917), unsuspected by the British aircraft, in which the Germans had improved their position in the canal region of the Yser, which was always flooded and an unpromising place for gains for either side.

<sup>1</sup> "Now is our great chance to strike strongly while we are on the top crest of our strength, and, undoubtedly, the one thing we should accomplish with the least possible delay is to turn the Germans from the Belgian coast. . . ." Mem. to Admiralty "early in 1917." Admiral Reginald Bacon. "The Dover Patrol."

The new Flanders offensive, in which the British took the principal part, was begun farther inland on a twenty-mile front from Dixmude to Warneton on July 31, 1917. This has been called the Battle of Flanders,<sup>1</sup> and here was seen some of the most desperate fighting of the war. But in this difficult Flanders country, as in the earlier battles, it was extremely hard to win tactical results. Throughout August the utmost efforts of the British and their French auxiliaries did not succeed in making gains that impaired the German positions sufficiently to cause a retreat from the Belgian coast, and farther south the Germans were able to hold Lens against all attacks, although the British were in the outskirts of the town for a long time.

The British losses had been very heavy, and for a time there was an enforced lull in the battle, but the objective was held to be so important that forces were gathered to renew the struggle. To coöperate with the attack in Flanders a landing from the sea had also been planned, to strike the flank of the Germans. Secret preparations had been made by the British Navy<sup>2</sup> and specially designed pontoons had been constructed, which were to be pushed to the shore by monitors. This landing operation had been rehearsed in every particular, and the detailed forces of the army and navy were held for months ready to seize upon a favorable time in the Battle of Flanders to assist the expected British advance. But the favorable time never came, and the projected landing operation could not be carried out.

The assaults of the Allies were again renewed, and from September 20 repeated attacks were made beyond Ypres. As before, there were local gains. Langemarck, the Ypres-Menin Road, etc., were familiar names, and for a time it was hoped that the Germans

<sup>1</sup> Also called Third Battle of Ypres.

<sup>2</sup> "The Dover Patrol." Admiral Reginald Bacon, R. N.

would be forced to fall back far enough to uncover the Channel ports, but in reality the Allies were never near the accomplishment of this objective. Helped by the conditions of the terrain the Germans were not in much danger, and gaining the control of the Passchendaele "ridge" was the only strategic result that could be claimed for the Allies.<sup>1</sup> The fighting was prolonged into November, and at this season the battle became a hopeless struggle in the mud, as in former years in this region. When the impossibility of gaining any additional result of value had thus become apparent,<sup>2</sup> the Battle of Flanders died down, and preparations were made for a British offensive on a different sector.

This was planned to be a drive at Cambrai, with novel tactics which gave promise of success. The foundation of the plan was to use a mass of British tanks to smash through the German positions. These land iron-clads had appeared in 1916, and they were originally devised by the British. A great deal had been expected of them at first, but they had not exerted a very great effect upon the tactics of the war. Under some conditions they had been of value, as they constituted moving protected positions for rapid-firing and machine guns, with endless chain tractors which were able to move over very broken ground. Some gains had been made by using them, but none that had been of great tactical results.

The new scheme for using the tanks in the British attack toward Cambrai was very ingenious, and it

<sup>1</sup> "Accordingly the enemy had adopted a system of elastic defense . . . while unable to drive us back from the ridge, they had succeeded, in combination with the state of the ground and the weather, in checking our progress." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>2</sup> "Despite the magnitude of his efforts, it was the immense natural difficulties, accentuated manifold by the abnormally wet weather rather than the enemy's resistance, which limited our progress." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."



deserved success. Under the direction of the British general, Byng, a large number of tanks was assembled with the idea of using them to roll ahead of an infantry attack to crush down barbed wire and other obstructions, and to clear a path pushed through by their weight and power so that it would be practicable for the attacking troops.<sup>1</sup> This was a good means of utilizing the qualities of the tanks to the best advantage.

Of course the success of this plan largely depended upon the element of surprise in its execution. The arrangements were very skilfully managed from this point of view. Taking advantage of darkness and misty weather a large number of tanks was aligned for attack, unsuspected by the Germans, opposite a sector of the German positions about ten miles wide. Artificial smoke had been added to the mist, and in the early dawn of November 20 the great attack was made. The tanks rolled forward in the mist and smoke, without giving warning by artillery preparation in advance (Battle of Cambrai, November 20, 1917).

The novel assault was a complete surprise to the Germans, and it scored a notable success. The tanks broke down the wire entanglements for the infantry advance, which was able to surge forward through the German positions, following the path made by the tanks, and the British easily won ground on a front of some twelve miles to a depth of five miles. The British had also captured many guns and prisoners.

Nothing could have been more complete than the success of this new tactical use of the tanks, but unfortunately there had been no preparation of a strong mobile force, to follow up such a deep penetration of

<sup>1</sup> "The general plan of attack was to dispense with previous artillery preparation, and to depend instead on tanks to smash through the enemy's wire, of which there was a great quantity protecting his trenches." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

the German positions, and to push through to a real break in the German lines of defenses. The surprise and consequent losses of positions had been widespread enough to make an actual weakness in the German defenses, which would have been vulnerable, if there had been an army at hand to seize upon the opportunity. The failure to prepare in advance to follow up a gain in force had been a common fault in the strategy of the Entente Allies, and in this case the successful use of a change in tactics was wasted in consequence.

This was not the end of the mistakes in connection with the Battle of Cambrai, which had opened so brilliantly. The result of the success of the British attack had been to throw out a salient about twelve miles wide and five miles deep, entering the German positions. Of course this salient was very vulnerable, and the question of just what terrain to hold should have been very carefully considered. Instead of this, the British attempted to consolidate all their gains even to the extent of beginning the construction of railways for supplies, showing that it was thought possible to hold the ground which had been won by the British.<sup>1</sup>

Taking advantage of this over-confidence, the Germans were able to concentrate reinforcements against this salient and to execute a surprise manoeuvre in turn. The British had allowed themselves to be occupied by German attacks in the north, which served as a diversion to cover the actual German manoeuvre. Suddenly the Germans made a surprise attack in force on the southern flank of the salient (November 30-December 1). Here the British defense was broken, and the German troops even penetrated to places where railway construction was going on in fancied

<sup>1</sup> "I felt confident that the defense of this sector could be considered safe." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

security.<sup>1</sup> It was at this point that American engineers, engaged in construction, were involved in the fighting.

As a result of this successful counter attack, and on account of heavy concentrations of artillery against the exposed portions of the salient (Bourlon Wood, etc.), the British were compelled to relinquish the greater part of their gains and to abandon any intention of continuing operations against Cambrai. In the end the score was about even in captured guns and prisoners. Seldom has a promising operation finished in a more disappointing manner. Ludendorff grimly states that the action "had given valuable hints for an offensive battle in the West, if we wished to undertake one in 1918."

This was the end of the active campaign on the Western front. Timely assistance had been sent to the Italians after their retreat into Venetia, both from the French army and from the British army. There had been time to strengthen the positions to which the Italians had retreated, extending from the mouth of the Piave to the mountainous Asiago plateau. The Austro-German armies had not been greatly superior to the Italians when the Italian débâcle had taken place, and it had taken a good deal of time to bring up men and guns against the new Italian positions. Before this could be accomplished by the Austrians, the Italian armies were comparatively safe. Their right was well protected by the Piave marshes, and their left was placed in strong positions in the mountains.

After the Austrians had brought up guns and reinforcements in the Asiago region, they were for a time favored by unusually mild weather, and they were able to bring pressure against the Italian left in the

<sup>1</sup> "In short, there is little doubt that, although an attack was expected generally, yet in these areas of the battle at the moment of delivery the assault effected a local surprise." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

MAP NO. 18. THE WESTERN FRONT, 1917  
(This map is diagrammatic only)

..... Battle line at beginning of 1917.

① Great German retreat to the "Hindenburg (Siegfried) Line." Shaded area indicates area given up by the Germans.

② Battle of Arras, British attack (April-May, 1917).

③ Second Battle of the Aisne, General Nivelle's French offensive (April-May, 1917).

Shaded area indicates gain in these two operations.

④ Battle of Messines Ridge, British attack (June, 1917).

⑤ Battle of Flanders (Third Battle of Ypres) British offensive (July-November, 1917).

Shaded area indicates ground gained.

⑥ Battle of Cambrai, British attack (November, 1917).

—— Battle line at the end of 1917.









mountains. At first the Austrians were successful and won many Italian positions in this region in the first half of December. Then severe cold and storms came on, and the Italians were no longer in danger, as the winter weather made fighting impossible in the mountains. Active operations were ended until spring and in the meantime the Italian armies were strengthened, and their losses in guns and equipment were repaired.

## CHAPTER XXXII

## THE EAST, LAST HALF OF 1917

IN the East the whole fabric of the Russian armies had disintegrated in the last half of 1917. All the early hopes of the Russian Republic had been disappointed, as far as any military assistance for the Entente Allies was concerned. For a time the Kerensky government seemed to be on a firm foundation, even after the Russian armies had refused to fight in July. This government, however, really only existed on sufferance. It had no actual control over the great masses of the Russian people, which were inclining toward the Reds.

There were some attempts to revive the military spirit of the Russians, which had been steadfast through so many reverses, but this had entirely disappeared. Military leaders attempted to assume control, notably Kornilof, the "Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies," but there was no response. The fighting spirit of Russia had been quenched.

The Germans and Austrians had still been obliged to maintain armies in the East on account of the great uncertainty as to what might happen in Russia, but through the summer the Austro-Germans had been very chary of provoking hostilities in the southeast for fear of uniting the Russians again in resistance against aggressions. An offensive on the part of the Teutons might have brought about what the Russian generals had been unable to accomplish, and the Russian soldiers might have been again aroused to

fighting pitch. It was a much wiser policy to keep the Teuton armies inactive, ready to put down any unexpected military move, but content to allow demoralization to spread through Russia. This was the policy of the Central Powers throughout the last half of the year in the southeast.

In the fall the Central Powers were able to detach troops from the armies in the East for use in other regions, although strong Teutonic forces were still kept on the Russian front. These reinforcements from the East made possible the overthrow of the Italian armies in October. Troops which had been withdrawn from the East also began to appear on the Western front.

The one exception to this policy of calculated military inactivity was the expedition against Riga in the north. The Germans had long desired to get possession of this Baltic port, and this was easily accomplished by a joint naval and military expedition (September 2, 1917), which took advantage of the weakness of the Russians on sea and land, without encountering serious opposition. Afterwards Dagö Island and Oesel Island, at the entrance of the Gulf of Riga, were occupied. Possession of these points of strategic importance increased the German domination of the Baltic Sea.

The loss of Riga made some stir in Russia, but the only effect upon the people was irritation, not resentment, and there was no desire to strike back at Germany. Agitation against the Kerensky central government, such as it was, increased, and its tenure of any vestiges of power became very uncertain. On November 1 Kerensky issued a statement to the press of the world, declaring that Russia was exhausted and that it was the turn of the Allies to shoulder the burden of the war. All this time the radical Reds, the Bolsheviks, had been asserting themselves more



strongly, and in November the Reds rose against the Kerensky government. The weakness of Kerensky's following was quickly shown, as this group was unable to make any headway against the Bolsheviks.

The Reds won control in Petrograd against only feeble resistance and with very little fighting. Kerensky was obliged to take refuge in flight, and his semblance of a popular government fell. The most prominent leaders of the Bolsheviks, Lenine and Trotsky, were typical advocates of extreme social revolution, and conditions in Russia became similar to those in the French Revolution, when the extremists had gained control. Within a month many revolutionary edicts were given out by some self-styled Soviet authority. All titles, distinctions, and privileges were abolished: the corporate property of nobles, merchants and bourgeois alike was to be handed over to the State, as was all church property; and all religious instruction was to cease in the schools, — familiar echoes of the extreme period of the French Revolution.

With the Russian Reds, the Bolsheviks, in control, Russia was soon split up among factions. The Ukraine and Finland declared independence at once, and in Siberia, Bessarabia, the Caucasus, and Lithuania communities set themselves aside and refused to acknowledge any central government in Russia.

The Bolsheviks were for peace, and the Germans were soon in negotiation with the Lenine and Trotsky faction. These Russian Reds announced a program for a peace of all the world: "The consummation of an immediate peace is demanded in all countries, both belligerent and neutral. The Russian Government counts on the firm support of workmen in all the countries in this struggle for peace." On December 6 Trotsky informed the Allied embassies in

Petrograd that these negotiations were in progress, but that they had been suspended to afford the governments of the Entente Allies an opportunity to state their terms and participate in the negotiations for peace. No official answer was given to this by the Entente Allies.

After some further delay, an armistice was signed between Germany and the representatives of the Russian Bolsheviks to take effect on December 17, and the end of the year 1917 found the German Government debating terms of peace under strange conditions. The Lenine-Trotsky faction did not represent all Russia as a nation. Outside of other dissensions, the Ukraine was openly negotiating for a separate peace. It is true that the military power of Russia had been utterly crushed, but it was equally true that the negotiations pending at the end of 1917, with such unreliable agents to deal with, did not comprise the elements of a peace that would deliver the spoils of conquest to Germany.

The cessation of active military operations was practically universal in this southeastern region which had been the theater of so many campaigns. Fortunately the Allied army at Saloniki was maintained at full strength, and this did great service for the Allies in the Balkan region. Under its guardianship Greece was held from any possibility of breaking away from the Allies. The revolution in Greece had developed into a final expulsion of the pro-German influences from the country, and King Constantine had abdicated on June 12, in favor of his second son Alexander, who was a safe ruler of the nation for the Allies.

Turkey was by this time outside of the German sphere of operations, and the Turks were no longer receiving any great assistance from Germany. Left to their own devices, the Turks had become demoralized, and there was no longer an efficient organiza-

tion of the Turkish armies. In spite of prophecies to the contrary, there was no effort made to recapture Bagdad or even to check the British, who gained control of additional territory in Mesopotamia.

In the latter part of 1917 a British expedition from Egypt had been working up through Palestine to increase the pressure already exerted upon Turkey by the British forces in Mesopotamia. This army advanced towards Jerusalem without any dangerous opposition from the Turks, and on December 9 Jerusalem was surrendered to General Allenby. Although this could not be called an event of great tactical importance in its actual effect upon the war, yet it must be remembered that Jerusalem was one of the sacred cities in the East, and its capture had a far-reaching moral effect. Among the Turks it intensified the feeling that was growing up in the nation that Turkey had been thrown over by Germany and Austria, and at the end of 1917 German influence was greatly weakened in Turkey.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE SITUATION AT THE FIRST OF THE YEAR, 1918

THE fighting of the year 1917 had been a great drain upon all the nations in the war, and the exhaustion of both sides was becoming apparent. The loss of Russia as a military factor had been a hard blow for the Allies; although the harm was destined to be more than made good by the reinforcement of the United States. But this help was thought impossible in 1917, and the remaining members of the Entente Allies, Great Britain and France, were in desperate straits from the protracted struggle.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the constant demands upon all the resources of these nations to maintain their great military and naval forces, the wastage of man power had made it a difficult task to keep their armies at the necessary strength.

The continued hammering on the Western front, with alternations of costly offensives and raiding trench warfare, had caused the armies of the Allies to waste away when they were taken into the battle area. To realize how constant these losses had been, it is only necessary to remember the many bloody battles which had left the swaying line of defenses unchanged, so far as concerned any strategic results, from Switzerland to the North Sea. Into these fatal

<sup>1</sup> "In these circumstances the task of the British and French armies has been a far heavier one throughout the year than was originally anticipated, and the enemy's means of meeting our attack have been far greater than either he or we could have expected." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."



stretches of intrenchments had been poured the best blood of France and England.

France was very near the end of her man power. Constantly fighting, and holding the greater part of the battle line, the French had suffered losses without intermission. But the great effort at Verdun, where the French stopped the only menacing offensive of the Germans in the West after 1914, had been so costly that the French had never recovered from it. They had lost over six hundred thousand men at Verdun, and the unsuccessful offensive of General Nivelle in the spring of 1917 had consumed the remnant of the French power to undertake an attacking operation on a large scale. From this time it was an arduous undertaking to keep the French ranks anywhere near fighting strength.

For Great Britain the Battle of the Somme had brought about a situation similar to that which Verdun had brought to France. The losses in all the British offensives had been heavy, but the protracted efforts in the Battle of the Somme, with months of continued fighting and consequent large losses, had drained the new armies of Great Britain as soon as they were raised by the conscription. The year 1917 had been another year of great British losses, the casualties in the prolonged Battle of Flanders reaching a total that forbade any hope of increased British armies for the new year; and Great Britain was also facing a difficult problem to keep her armies on a fighting basis for 1918.

In Germany the same drain had been going on, although the Germans would have the troops released from the conquered Eastern front as a reservoir of reinforcements available for the Western front in 1918. The situation as regarded Russia had become so favorable for Germany early in 1918 that it was possible to withdraw large numbers of troops from the

East. The peace negotiations between Germany and the Bolsheviki of Russia had been going on as might have been expected from such parties in a treaty. During the armistice in December, 1917, and in January, 1918, there were conferences, and proposals, and counter proposals with revolutionary appeals to the German troops, and stern military demands from the Germans.

The German proposals for the annexation of Courland and other Russian territory aroused the opposition of the Reds at the conferences held at Brest-Litovsk, and it also developed that the Germans were negotiating a separate peace with the Ukraine independent government. The armistice was renewed until February 12, and the conferences broke up in bitterness over the German demands for cession of Russian territory, with a threat that the Germans would invade Russia unless these German demands were conceded.

In the meantime the Germans had made a separate treaty with the revolutionists in the Ukraine which would have given great advantages to Germany, if there had been any means of carrying out the treaty. The Russian Reds still balked at signing the proposed German treaty, but they announced that the Russian army had been demobilized and withdrawn from the war. On February 18, the day the extension of the armistice expired, the Germans made good their threat, and German armies began to invade Russia. Then the Bolsheviki issued a statement saying that the Reds were compelled to sign the peace treaty, and the "Treaty of Brest-Litovsk" was signed on March 3, 1918.

This treaty gave Germany everything she had asked, and, as in the case of the Ukraine, it would have been a very advantageous treaty for Germany if any one had been able to carry out the conditions which had

been imposed upon the Russians. Disorders and counter revolutions continued throughout Russia, and at times the Russians made feeble attempts to fight the Germans. Consequently it was still necessary to keep Teuton troops along the Russian front, but the great armies of the preceding years were not required, and large numbers of these troops had become available for the Western front.

In spite of this military advantage for Germany the German Government was contending with a weakness that had not yet appeared in the Allied countries. Discontent was increasing in Germany, and it was steadily growing into dissatisfaction with the aims and objects of the German Government in the war. President Wilson's distinction between the German Government and the German people had grown into a real issue in Germany.

There had been an increasing disposition among the people to insist upon a share in the Government of Germany. Reforms had been promised, but this had not quieted the agitation, which increased through 1917. In spite of the personal opposition of the Emperor and the military leaders, resolutions had been passed in the Reichstag (July, 1917) in favor of a peace with no annexations and no indemnities.<sup>1</sup> On August 1 Pope Benedict made a plea for peace upon this basis, but this and all other moves for peace were rejected upon the grounds that it was impossible to make peace with Germany while the existing government was in power.

This held the German Government before its people responsible for the continuance of the war, and the German Government was always, from this time on, in the position of being obliged to satisfy the German people with successful conduct of the war or else of

<sup>1</sup> "... found disastrous expression in the peace resolutions of July, 1917." Von Tirpitz. "My Memoirs."

facing downfall in case of military failure. In the year 1917 the German Government had managed to keep a hold on the people through the success of the submarine campaign and the collapse of Russia. At the end of 1917, when it was evident that, in spite of great damage, the unrestricted use of the submarine was not destined to win the war, the German Government was able to use the peace with the Russian Reds as an argument with the people to continue the war.

The success of the negotiations with the Russian revolutionists, and the apparent gain of all Germany's objects in the East, again united the German people in a resolve to make one more military effort to win the war. The German Staff, of which Ludendorff was now the controlling mind, openly announced to the German people that all the military resources of Germany would be massed to win a final victory on the Western front, and that such a victory was certain, as the Allies, with their resources in man-power at a low ebb,<sup>1</sup> could not gather the strength to resist the overwhelming German forces available for the great attack. No counter attack was possible that would divert German troops. The East was subdued. The offensive power of Italy had been destroyed for the time being by the fearful reverses of 1917. The full military strength of Germany would be used in the West.

The German leaders confidently argued that the United States would not be able to provide a military force sufficient to turn the balance and check the drive on the Western front.<sup>2</sup> It was shown that, according

<sup>1</sup> "Allied resources in man power at home were low and there was little prospect of materially increasing their armed strength, even in the face of the possibility of having practically the whole military strength of the Central Powers against them in the spring of 1918." General Pershing, Report.

<sup>2</sup> "... But the Germans were persuaded that they were quite near a victorious end, and that after leaving the Eastern front they would throw themselves on to the Western front and that the war would end before America had time to come in. Their reckoning was at fault, as we all know today." Count Czernin. "In the World War."



to all European military formulas, the American armies would be negligible factors in the 1918 campaign. It was known that the armies of France and Great Britain had been much weakened in 1917, and they would not be at full strength in the spring of 1918. Consequently, with the reinforcements from the East, the Germans would possess a military superiority that would make victory for the Ludendorff offensive inevitable.

These calculations convinced Germany that Ludendorff would lead her armies to a victorious peace,<sup>1</sup> and again the Germans were united in their faith in an invasion of France, and a third attempt to carry out the war plan, ever present in the German strategy, to smash the Allied armies and overwhelm France.

In this last effort of the German military power there was again no lack in the support of the German people, and the preparations for the most dangerous offensive of The World War were complete in every military sense.<sup>2</sup> But this time there was one ominous condition that was different. Behind the advancing German armies there was a sullen, suspicious people only held together by promises of success, and ready to break into revolution at the first failure. The German Government realized this, and the last offensive was prepared, with the full knowledge that it would be the last. It would be final if victorious, and the German people would rise against their Government if it failed.

<sup>1</sup> "The last war period in Germany was controlled by one will only and that was Ludendorff's. His thoughts were centered on fighting, his soul on victory." Count Czernin. "In the World War."

<sup>2</sup> "When on March 21, 1918, the German army on the western front began its series of offensives, it was by far the most formidable force the world had ever seen." General Pershing, Report.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE FACTORS IN THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE OF 1918

BEFORE giving an account of the military events of the great German offensive of 1918, it would be well to consider the character of this last effort of the military power of Germany, and also to give a summary of the factors, in its favor and against it, which were influencing the fortunes of this German undertaking in the months when it was in operation. These factors were destined to sway the balance from original conditions that meant success to conditions created three thousand miles away that meant its final failure.<sup>1</sup>

In the first place it should be stated that the initial advantages possessed by Germany on the Western front at the beginning of 1918 were, broadly speaking:

A superiority in military strength over the Allies.

A new system of tactics unsuspected by the Allies.

The German superiority in military strength came from two causes. The Germans had been able to bring troops from the East on account of the dwindling away of the Russian armies, and consequently the German Command would have superior numbers to use in assaults upon the Western front for the first time since the Verdun offensive early in 1916.

The military situation on the Western front in the early part of 1918 was similar to that which existed

<sup>1</sup> "The Allies are very weak and we must come to their relief in this year, 1918. The year after may be too late." General Pershing, Report, December, 1917.

before the Verdun offensive in 1916. In the case of the 1918 offensive the Germans actually had greater numbers of men<sup>1</sup> available for the battle line than were to be found in the ranks of the French and British armies. But any such superiority, it must be understood, was only a small percentage; and this was nothing approaching a winning advantage, if the two opposing forces were to be considered merely as attacking and defending armies. If it had been a question of the whole German army attacking the whole Allied army, it would have been clear at once that the Germans did not possess any numerical superiority that would warrant making the attack.

As explained, the military advantage for the Germans should not be measured merely by a percentage of superiority in numbers. It really was founded on the conditions existing at this time, which enabled the German Command to concentrate its strength against chosen points of attack, without running the risk of exposing other sectors of its battle line to a counter offensive on the part of the Allies. This meant that the Germans would be able to establish a superior military force at the points of attack, and this has always been the basis of successful tactics in warfare. That this part of the calculations of Ludendorff was sound was shown by the event. In their offensive the Germans were actually able to bring up greater numbers against the points of attack.

Their ability to do this, and the safety the Germans were justified in feeling against any counter offensive of the Allies, comprised the second cause for the military superiority of Germany at the beginning of 1918. The Germans were right in assuming that the Allied armies were too exhausted to take the offensive early in 1918. Both sides had felt the fearful drain

<sup>1</sup> "Numerically we never had been so strong in comparison with our enemies." "Ludendorff's Own Story."

of losses, and both sides were spent, but Germany had the East to draw upon for reinforcements. The Allies were forced to fill their ranks by new drafts of recruits. This situation made it a safe calculation that the Allied armies would be in no condition to take the offensive early in 1918. Consequently the double reason for German military superiority at the beginning of 1918 can be expressed by stating that a reinforced army was about to use its chosen forces against an army that had been exhausted by long battles and was finding it difficult to fill its ranks.

These conditions had unquestionably established a great military advantage for the Germans at the time, and this was beyond the power of the Allies to remedy. A strong reinforcement of fighting troops was necessary to turn the balance, but the resources of the Allies in man-power were too depleted to provide this needed factor to defeat the Germans. It is difficult to see how Germany could have been prevented from winning the war, if it had been only a question of the powers of resistance of the French and British armies. The additional element of military force necessary to overcome the established German superiority was provided by the unexpected strength the American army was able to throw into the battle.<sup>1</sup>

As has been said, all the calculations of the German Command confidently assumed that it would be impossible for the Americans to bring into the battle sufficient numbers to have any effect on the result, and any statements to the contrary were ridiculed.<sup>2</sup> The German Staff must have known that a great many

<sup>1</sup> "Why this unexpected defeat following performances so grand? Because a military commander, intoxicated with isolated success, flushed with the omnipotence of Cæsar, twice failed to conceive a proper estimate of America as a factor." Maximilian Harden.

<sup>2</sup> "Soldiers of a child's game mostly made of paper cuttings."

"All bluff, pure bluff celebrated in Paris by a review."

German newspapers.



soldiers were being trained in the United States, and, at the end of 1917, that they were being transported across the Atlantic, but it was also known that the bulk of the officers and men had never before had any military training. From the point of view of European military experts this made it an impossibility for the United States to deliver an efficient army on the battle field for the campaign of 1918.

Yet, at the very time the German offensive was launched, the work of producing and delivering an efficient army was well under way, and the impossibility was accomplished in time to turn the balance of the war. The European military experts had not realized the spirit with which America would enter upon its task in the war, and above all things they did not appreciate the great advantage our nation possessed in the intelligence of the personnel of the United States Army. No such material was available in Europe for military service. In the United States, where there were no class distinctions, the most intelligent and adaptable elements in the population were in the American army from the beginning, and European precedents as to the time required to make an army were found not to apply to this case.

It was the experience of our Civil War over again. In the emergency of 1917-1918 the time required to mobilize large numbers of men, and to give them the essentials of military training, became a matter of a few months. That this was possible became apparent after the training camps were in operation, and the time of intensive training was consequently shortened. This meant a double error in the German calculations, much greater numbers of men sent to Europe than had been anticipated, and these men ready for battle in a much shorter time.

Through the fall of 1917, and the following winter, the transportation of American soldiers to Europe

went steadily on. By the first of March, the month of the first German assault, there were over 290,000 in Europe. In March 84,889 were taken across.

The totals in the following months were so impressive that they should be stated, to show the great forces that were being accumulated against the Germans. These figures are official.

April 118,642	August 285,974
May 245,945	September 257,457
June 278,664	October 180,326
July 306,350	

At the time of the great offensive the German Command did not have any idea of the number of Americans that were arriving in France. Ludendorff writes: "How many Americans had got across by April we did not know." And he makes the admission: "But the rapidity with which they actually did arrive proved surprising."

To prove how quickly and effectively these American troops were used in the war, it is only necessary to state that of the two million men in the American Expeditionary Force "thirteen hundred and ninety thousand saw active service at the front."<sup>1</sup>

As they were hurried into action in the crisis, and this meant exhaustive service, the drain upon the new levies of the United States was insatiable, in constant demands upon their numbers for the nearly impossible task of keeping the active divisions at fighting strength and putting new combat divisions into the field. At times the supply of fighting men lagged far behind the needs of the Army, and it was a difficult undertaking to maintain the efficient use of our troops on the battle line. Yet the whole result was the unexpected military strength that was thrown into the battle at the crisis — and its greatest tribute was Ludendorff's surprise at its arrival.

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Summary. Ayers.

The new system of tactics, which the Germans planned to use against the Allies, had been rehearsed in the Riga expedition by the German general, Hutier. It was a departure from the method of attack in vogue of destroying the enemy's intrenchments with artillery, being a return to the first principles of a surprise concentration of superior numbers against the position to be attacked. By this Hutier manoeuvre many divisions were to be placed about the region of intended attack, with their movements and transportation carefully worked out, so that they would converge upon the objective in successive installments. Every device for concealing these movements was to be used, to blend them with the usual activity going on behind the battle lines. Artillery was to be used in great strength with the infantry, but its force was to be in sudden blasts of intense bombardment, without the warning of artillery preparation. Mustard gas shells were also to be employed in great quantities, and smoke screens were to be used. By this method it was planned to infiltrate the enemy's position with streams of men, who would keep coming on in increasing numbers.<sup>1</sup>

This manoeuvre had been carefully developed and rehearsed by the German Staff in all its details, until it was possible to carry it into execution with a large number of divisions, and it was resolved to use it in the great drive of 1918 against the Allies. It was an especially dangerous method of attack against the Allies at this time, when the Allied commands had become convinced that intrenched positions could not be rushed. From the hard experience of the strength of the enemy's positions against the Allied

<sup>1</sup> "Infiltration is the basis of the advance. . . . By infiltration with a great numerical superiority the enemy was able to surround the strong points, and either force the defenders to retreat or cut them off." *German Tactics, 1918*, Historical Section, General Staff, U. S. A.

attacks, they had acquired an undue confidence in the strength of their own intrenchments. That this had become a fixed idea is shown by General French's statement, written even after the war: "A principle in warfare of to-day which I have held ever since — namely, that given forces fairly equally matched, you can 'bend' but you cannot 'break' your enemy's trench line."<sup>1</sup>

The Allied commanders had not realized that their tasks had become more difficult because the Hindenburg-Ludendorff Command had developed the changed German system of defense, which has been described. Consequently the Allied systems of trenches had no such depth of positions as the Germans had constructed. From the constant use of the same tactics in trench warfare, the conviction had also become fixed in the minds of the Allies that no other tactics could be used. These conditions offered a double advantage for the approaching German offensive.

It was not fully understood by the Allied commands that the Germans had devised new tactics, but the coming German drive on the Western front had been so openly discussed in Germany that it was known far in advance that a great offensive was impending. The preparations of the Entente Allies against this consisted mainly in organizing as strong a force as possible of mobile reserves. This was helped by the fact that the British had extended their front to the Oise, which released many French troops. Consequently the French Command was gathering mobile reserves, with the object of having a strong force for a counter attack when the German offensive should be launched.

In spite of the good effect of the Allied War Council, the Allied armies had never been united under a single command. This had always been one of the great

<sup>1</sup> "1914", Lord French.



defects in the conduct of the war on the part of the Allies. No matter how cordial the coöperation between the different commands might be, there was always the drawback of a divided leadership. As the French were defending their own country, and as they were taking care of the greatest part of the fighting line, a French general was the logical selection for Commander-in-Chief. The influence of the American Staff had been for a French command from the first, but the British had never been able to assent to this. Consequently the critical situation early in 1918 found the Allied armies still at the disadvantage of a divided command.

To review these elements of strength and weakness for both sides is a help toward understanding the events of the campaign and its changing fortunes.<sup>1</sup> It is also important to bear in mind that both sides were war-weary, the Allies exhausted in man power, the Germans ready to break into revolution at any unfavorable turn, and that the morale of each side was in a condition to vary greatly according to the course of events.

<sup>1</sup> "We had a new enemy, economically the most powerful in the world, an enemy possessing everything required for the hostile operations, reviving the hopes of all our foes and saving them from collapse while preparing mighty forces. It was the United States of America and her advent was perilously near. Would she appear in time to snatch the victor's laurels from our brows? That, and that only, was the decisive question! I believed I could answer it in the negative." Hindenburg, "Out of My Life."

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE FIRST HALF OF 1918<sup>1</sup>

#### THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE

FOLLOWING the German plan, as prearranged for the employment of new tactics, the preparations of the German Command for the first blow of the offensive of 1918 were made with great skill and thoroughness.<sup>2</sup> The principal attack was to be under the direction of General Hutier, whose manoeuvre was to be used. The positions chosen for attack were on the part of the British line which lay between the Scarpe and the Oise, extending from Arras to La Fère. The point of heaviest attack was the region near St. Quentin. Here was in position the Fifth British Army (General Gough). The Third British Army (General Byng) was next in line on the north, in the sector of Arras. The group of German armies in these regions was under the command of the German Crown Prince. The group of German armies in Flanders was commanded by the Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria.

The problem of the Allies was difficult in preparing to defend their long line against the concentrations of the expected offensive, but on these sectors of the line the prevailing over-confidence in the strength of in-

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 20 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> "For the offensive — Winter 1917-1918 — German divisions received intensive instruction and training in mobile warfare with unceasing drill from morning until late at night; by February 10, 58 divisions had completed a four weeks' course." German Tactics, 1918, Historical Section, General Staff, U. S. A.

trenchments was in evidence. This part of the British battle line had been extended to the Oise,<sup>1</sup> but, even though it was consequently necessary to maintain a lengthened line, deep defensive positions behind the forward defense had not been hurried to completion, nor made ready in case of a drive through the "three defensive belts"<sup>2</sup> which had been constructed. There also were no prepared positions in case of a retirement. The only preparation mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's Dispatch was an uncompleted bridge head near Péronne. Evidently there was no suspicion that the new German methods of attack would be too strong for the existing lines of intrenchments and the zones of fire which had been devised.

Opposite the British intrenchments near St. Quentin the divisions for General Hutier's great assault were brought into position on roads and lines of transportation converging upon the point of attack.<sup>3</sup> A great strength of artillery had been prepared with high explosive and mustard gas shells, and a large part of this artillery was ready to be moved forward with the attack. Preparations were also made to use smoke screens. So carefully had the movements of these German forces been covered that their presence was not suspected by the British Command. Even when they were advanced for the attack, they were able to approach the British lines undiscovered.<sup>4</sup>

In the early mists of the morning on March 21 the

<sup>1</sup> "Holding some 125 miles of active front." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>2</sup> "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>3</sup> "Picardy offensive. — The first line assault divisions came up the night before the attack. The second line supporting divisions started their march so as to arrive at determined points by the zero hour. The third line reserve divisions began marching forward from the rear areas only when the attack was known to be under way." *German Tactics, 1918*, Historical Section, General Staff, U. S. A.

<sup>4</sup> "And the Germans were actually in some parts within a few yards of our front line before any one knew of their approach." Lloyd George.

great assault began on a front of about fifty miles.<sup>1</sup> There were bombardments of intense violence, with the use of great quantities of gas shells, and smoke screens were also used. The artillery was then switched to a barrage, and the streams of infantry advanced. These unexpected and overwhelming attacks made gains at once. The British positions were penetrated, and the German drive continued with such increasing strength, as Hutier's assembled forces poured in, that the British defense was broken west of St. Quentin.<sup>2</sup> This break in the British lines was so different from anything that had been foreseen that it not only dislocated the Fifth Army but it brought about a costly retreat, and the crippling of this British army.<sup>3</sup>

The Third British Army had not been so hard pressed, and it was not seriously impaired, but, to keep the two British armies in touch, the Fifth Army was obliged to retreat to the west, swinging its right flank back over thirty miles and abandoning a great extent of terrain. Péronne and Bapaume were soon captured by the Germans, and on March 27 they also occupied Albert. On the same day Roye and Noyon were taken. On the next day the Germans had pushed west beyond Montdidier. In the first days of April the Germans were only about nine miles from Amiens, and they could claim ninety thousand prisoners and thirteen hundred guns.

These were very heavy losses, and the ground yielded to the Germans in ten days was greater than that gained in the months of the Battle of the Somme, and in the Hindenburg withdrawal of 1917, but these were not

<sup>1</sup> Battle of Picardy, also called Second Battle of the Somme.

<sup>2</sup> "Favored by a thick fog, which hid from our artillery and machine guns the S.O.S. signals sent up by our outpost line, and in numbers which made loss of direction impossible, the attacking German infantry forced their way into our foremost defensive zone." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>3</sup> "Crippling one of our great armies." Lloyd George.



the most serious results for the Allies. There was another element in the situation that was more damaging to the Allied armies. As the Fifth British Army retreated toward the west, it left defenseless an increasingly long sector south of Noyon, curving north beyond Montdidier, and it was necessary that this dangerous opening should be defended by the French.<sup>1</sup>

With extraordinary rapidity and efficiency French troops were rushed to this region, and the almost impossible task was accomplished of repairing the defense.

To save this situation had been a great drain on the Allied reserves, and the necessity to use such large numbers of French troops for this purpose had at once neutralized a force that had been gathered for a different object in the campaign. As has been explained, it had been intended to use these mobile French reserves for counter attacks against the Germans. There is no need to point out how great might have been the results of such attacks upon an enemy exhausted by days of fighting, but any such plan was rendered impossible by the need to use these troops to defend the new line, which was nearly as long as the original battle line of March 21.

On the other hand there was a great gain to the Allies from the costly object lesson in the weakness of divided commands. This serious reverse at last brought about the appointment of a French general as Commander-in-Chief of the armies operating in France. On April 3 the command of the French, British and American armies was given to General Foch.<sup>2</sup> Thus the armies operating in France were

<sup>1</sup> "As a result of a meeting held in the afternoon of the 23d March, arrangements were made for the French to take over as rapidly as possible the front held by the Fifth Army south of Péronne, and for the concentration of a strong force of French divisions on the southern portion of the battle front." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>2</sup> First given control March 26, to "coördinate" the Allied Armies.

united under the most brilliant strategist of the French Army. Foch had attained a high military reputation through his able conduct at the Battle of the Marne (Manoeuvre of La Fère Champenoise) which was the decisive move of the battle, and his career in the subsequent campaigns of the war had added to his reputation. He had been the French Chief of General Staff, the French representative in the War Council, and he was obviously the man for the emergency.

From what has been said of the course of the Battle of Picardy it can readily be seen that the task of the new Commander-in-Chief was one of the most difficult ever given to a general on taking command of an army. Foch was obliged to face the culminating effort of the greatest military machine in history, with a force placed under his command made up of armies that had never been in coördination, and after the collapse of one of these armies. It was a hard fate that the gap left by the defeat of this army had to be filled by using a great part of the French reserves destined for a counter attack, thus depriving Foch of the chance to take the offensive, as an axiom of Foch was "To make war is to attack."

The first care of the new Commander-in-Chief was to combine the strength of the French and British troops, to bring about a coördination of his whole command. For the reasons explained there was no possibility of counter attacks, and the Germans were able to hold securely all their gains in Picardy. The German victory was amazing, — beyond expectation, as was shown at the time by the exultation of the German military leaders. In regard to this action, Ludendorff's post-war pessimism is again not convincing. The Germans knew that they had won great results.

Suddenly there was a new attack by the Germans in an entirely different area, but again on the British front. On April 8 there were heavy bombardments

in the region of La Bassée and Armentières, which were followed by strong attacks in this sector, and on April 9 General Haig reported: "Favored by a thick mist which made observation impossible, the enemy succeeded in forcing his way into the Allied positions in the neighborhood of Neuve Chapelle."<sup>1</sup>

These attacks developed into a second stage of the great German offensive, and, as before, the shock of the initial surprise attack seriously impaired the British positions. Portuguese troops were reported as fighting with the British troops on this sector. On April 10 the British were forced back north of Armentières, and this reverse resulted in the capture of Armentières on the following day. As before, in the fighting of March, the Germans in ten days' fighting had won a broad salient, extending from the south of Ypres to Lens, driven into the British defenses; and, as before, a bad feature of the situation was the necessity to send French troops over to this sector to reinforce the defense.<sup>2</sup>

For over another month there was desultory fighting, and then there was a third assault by the Germans, against the French armies this time. This attack was delivered on May 27<sup>3</sup> in the sector between Soissons and Rheims, in which the French positions had been thought very strong. There the same tactics were repeated with the same results. The French defenses were broken, and the Germans surged over the supposedly impregnable Chemin des Dames, captured Soissons, and drove forward over thirty miles in four days to the Marne itself. The Germans had taken forty thousand prisoners and four

<sup>1</sup> Battle of the Lys.

<sup>2</sup> "I had represented the state of affairs to Gen. Foch, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces. . . . Gen. Foch had complied with my requests without delay. Certain French forces were moved to the north. . . ." "Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches."

<sup>3</sup> Third Battle of the Aisne.

hundred guns, and they had won another great salient, of which Château-Thierry was the apex. This time British divisions had to be brought to the French front.

This defeat was a staggering blow for the French, and it destroyed the feeling of security that had begun to prevail, as the weeks passed and no additional gains of importance were made by the Germans. This last drive had easily broken through what were considered the strongest French defenses; it had smashed through a long way on the road to Paris;<sup>1</sup> and the Germans were back on the Marne.

Ten days afterwards, on June 9, the Germans made another gain of importance south of Montdidier and Noyon, extending the ground gained in the March attack and straightening the line west of Soissons.

In March there had begun a bombardment of Paris at a range far longer than had ever been used before in artillery practice. The small group of German guns conducting this bombardment was nearly seventy-five miles from Paris. No result of any military importance was accomplished, but the destruction of a church during Good Friday services aroused indignation in Europe, as one hundred and sixty-five persons were killed or wounded, many of them women and children. The long-range bombardment did not even have much effect upon the Germans, as all minds were occupied with the great drive in France.

The military situation had grown very serious for Foch's armies. The German offensive had made gains at each assault, and each time there had been so great a dislocation of the Allied forces that all the efforts of the new Commander-in-Chief had been needed to

<sup>1</sup> ". . . And the German advance was directed toward Paris. During the first days of June something akin to a panic seized the city, and it was estimated that 1,000,000 people left during the spring of 1918." General Pershing. Report.



bolster the defense. This had prevented the possibility of a counter offensive, and there had not been any decisive check to the German advance, which had progressed until it actually threatened Paris. In addition to this danger, the great salients, which had been pushed into the Allied defenses, had broken up the lateral communication between the different sectors of the Allied armies, and this interruption was compelling them to operate with a serious handicap.

These successive reverses for the Allies, with no power yet developed of stopping the Germans, had greatly affected the spirit of the Allied armies, and there is no question of the fact that their morale was ebbing. In this great crisis the decision was made to use the American troops as combat divisions.

Throughout the emergency the Americans had been utilized as reserves, and American troops had been grouped with the French and British forces which were resisting the Germans, but the French Command had been very reluctant to use American divisions as fighting units.<sup>1</sup> General Foch and the French Staff did not believe that officers and men of such recent training could be trusted to keep their organization under the strain of battle. It was only the desperate situation after the German drive to the Marne that induced General Foch as a last resort to place the American divisions in the fighting line.

General Pershing and his officers did not share this lack of confidence in the Americans, and they advocated the use of these divisions in battle. They had been in personal contact with their troops, and they had appreciated the spirit and intelligence shown by officers and men. Short as their instruction had been, it was the right training to fight the tactics of the

<sup>1</sup> "The prevailing opinion among the Allies was that American units were suitable only for the defensive." General Pershing. Report.

German drive. As General Pershing expressed it, "The development of a self-reliant infantry by thorough drill in the use of the rifle and in the tactics of open warfare was always uppermost."

The student of the history of The World War will appreciate the value of the double service rendered by General Pershing in resolutely standing out for these tactics and this use of the American troops in the battle line. It had been the intention of the Allied commands to use the Americans as replacements for the French and British armies. This would have absorbed our levies, and our troops would merely have become a part of the existing unsatisfactory methods and conditions.<sup>1</sup> From the first the American Commander-in-Chief had made it his task to combat this policy, and it was only by his firm, yet always tactful conduct at the military councils of the Allies that this mistake was prevented, and the United States Army became a decisive force in the crisis.

American troops were freely given to the French and British armies in the emergency<sup>2</sup> brought about by the German successes. But these dispositions, and the agreements in the military councils for the movements of troops from the United States, were always made with the understanding, insisted upon by General Pershing, that the ultimate use of our troops was to be as an American fighting army.<sup>3</sup>

That the opinion of the American Command was

<sup>1</sup> "When the Germans were practising for open warfare and concentrating their most aggressive personnel in shock divisions, the training of the Allies was still limited to trench warfare. As our troops were being trained for open warfare, there was every reason why we could not allow them to be scattered among the Allies." General Pershing. Report.

<sup>2</sup> "The great crisis . . . during which all our combatant troops were placed at his disposal." General Pershing. Report.

<sup>3</sup> "Keeping in mind always the determination of this government to have its various forces collected as speedily as their training and the military situation permit, into an independent American army." Indorsement of Secretary Baker to Joint Note of War Council.

right was proved by the first American division operating as a fighting unit. On May 28 at Cantigny, in the region of Montdidier, the First Division captured the town and all other objectives, and held them against severe counter attacks. Although this was a local action, it showed that an American division could be relied upon in battle. In the first days of June the same fighting qualities were shown by the Second Division in hot engagements, including the action of Belleau Wood. It was at this place that the Marine Brigade fought so gallantly. These tests in battle gave the French more confidence in the American troops.

Through June and the early part of July it was evident that the Germans were preparing for another heavy drive, and it was known that the Château-Thierry salient was the greatest point of danger. A group of American divisions was accordingly gathered in this region. "It was no longer a question as to which division had completed training according to any alleged schedule; it was a dire emergency, and a question as to what troops of any class were most available for Château-Thierry, . . . to help the French in a desperate attempt to save Paris."<sup>1</sup>

The following will show how great was the emergency after the German drive to the Marne (May 27, 1918). There is no need to add anything to describe the critical situation.

"Gen. Foch has presented to us a statement of the utmost gravity . . . as there is no possibility of the British and French increasing the numbers of their divisions . . . there is a great danger of the war being lost unless the numerical inferiority of the Allies can be remedied as rapidly as possible by the advent of American troops. . . . We are satisfied that Gen.

<sup>1</sup> Colonel R. H. C. Kelton, General Staff, U. S. A.

# MAP NO. 20. THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE OF 1918 (This map is diagrammatic only)

- Battle line of March 20, 1918.
- ← indicates first break in British line near St. Quentin.
- ① Gains in German attacks beginning March 21, 1918. (Battle of Picardy.)
- ② Battle of the Lys, second phase of the offensive, ground gained in Flanders (April, 1918).
- ③ Third Battle of the Aisne, ground gained in attacks on the French beginning May 27, 1918.
- ④ Fourth German attack, June, 1918.
- Battle line of July 14, 1918.









Foch . . . is not overestimating the needs of the case . . .”

D. LLOYD GEORGE  
CLEMENCEAU  
ORLANDO

VERSAILLES CONFERENCE, JUNE 12, 1918.

“We recognize that the combatant troops to be dispatched in July may have to include troops which have had insufficient training, but we consider the present emergency such as to justify a temporary and exceptional departure by the United States . . .”

FOCH  
MILNER  
PERSHING

AGREEMENT, JUNE 5, 1918.

REJSC  
Kadomle

## CHAPTER XXXVI

THE TURN OF THE TIDE<sup>1</sup>

As had been anticipated, the Germans planned a new drive for the middle of July, and the salient of Château-Thierry was the storm center of the battle. This assault was the most dangerous of the war, as it was the final concentrated effort of the military strength of Germany. Upon the event depended the issue of the war.<sup>2</sup> The Germans had retained the offensive for nearly four months. Four times there had been assaults upon different sectors of the defenses of the Allies, and each time the Germans had won a success. The fifth attack was the critical operation of the war.

The factors in the military situation were clearly defined, although at the time the publics of the different countries were bewildered by the mass of conflicting reports. The true state of affairs was as follows: the German successes had broken the defensive lines of the Allies until their lateral communications had been cut; the Allied armies had been so dislocated and so impaired that practically all of their mobile reserves had been needed to repair their defense; the Germans had pushed through a salient to the Marne, threatening an advance on Paris; the Germans still possessed the offensive, and they had prepared for a powerful drive through this salient. These were the

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 21 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> "The enemy had encouraged his soldiers to believe that the July 15 attack would conclude the war with a German peace." General Pershing. Report.

actual military conditions, which were very favorable for the Germans.

Fortunately there were other factors in the problem. It is true that Germany had established this favorable military situation, and it is also true that the morale of the Allied armies had suffered from the strain, but the Allies possessed a new element of strength that was underestimated, both by the Allies in their depression and by the Germans in their exultation. The military force of the United States was to be thrown into the scale, and the balance of power depended upon its value, which was about to be tested in battle.

On the other hand, although the Germans were confident of the result, and their morale had been helped by continued victories, it must be remembered that the German armies had suffered from the wear and tear of a long campaign. In addition to this the Germans were jaded and war-weary from the long-protracted struggle, and their armies and the German people behind their armies were ready to break into discontent at the first reverse. The difference in morale between the two haggard forces consisted only in the fact that the Germans had been winning. The touch of defeat would at once reverse the situation, and the morale of the Germans would in turn fall away.

The German military plan was to make attack through the Château-Thierry salient to the south and east, with the twofold object of extending their gains to the south and by the drive to the east broadening the salient below Rheims to pinch off that city, as the Germans were also to attack east of Rheims. If this plan had succeeded, Rheims would have been untenable, and the Germans would have controlled a wide terrain for operations in the country toward Châlons.

The German assault was delivered on July 15, with all the strength of their long preparation behind



it. It was on a wide front, as there were also attacks east of Rheims extending as far as the Argonne, but the main attack was through the Château-Thierry salient as described. The drive against the salient toward the southeast below Rheims won some measure of success. There were gains through the French positions, and an advance was made across the Marne in the southeast, but there was no break in the French lines of defense, as in the May drive. Profiting by the lessons of that disaster, a deep defense was used by the French in this battle.<sup>1</sup>

To the south and southwest, where the Americans were in position, the Germans were held without gains of any account. After three days of successful resistance, General Foch was convinced that he possessed at last the much-needed additional strength that would permit him to make a counter attack upon the Germans. General Pershing's comment shows how anxious he had been for an offensive. "Seizing this opportunity to support my conviction, every division with any sort of training was made available for use in a counter-offensive."<sup>2</sup>

This decisive counter attack by the French and Americans was launched on July 18, without the warning of preliminary bombardment, driving toward Soissons against the western side of the salient. The Allies also attacked on the east. The Germans brought up large numbers of reserves and for days made a stubborn defense, but the Allied offensive was not to be denied, and the drive into the salient from the west made all the German positions in the salient untenable. The Germans were forced to retreat, and before the end of the month "the operation of reducing the salient was finished."<sup>3</sup>

This is the bald account of the events of the de-

<sup>1</sup> Said to have been devised by General Gouraud.    <sup>2</sup> General Pershing.

<sup>3</sup> General Pershing.

cisive action that turned the tide of the war, but these events do not express a fraction of the moral effect produced by the enforced retreat of the Germans. The rebound of the Allies from the depths of depression to exultation was immediate, "for in those three days the morale of all the Allies had been born anew."<sup>1</sup> Equally marked was the effect upon the Germans of this startling revelation of unexpected strength in Foch's armies. The transition of the Germans from the elation of victory to the despondency of defeat followed at once. From this time the morale of the German armies fell away as rapidly as the morale of the Allies improved.

Nothing that could be written would express this great change in the war as forcibly as the statement given out by the former German Chancellor Hertling a few days before his death. "At the beginning of July, 1918, I was convinced, I confess it, that before the first of September our adversaries would send us peace proposals. . . . We expected grave events in Paris for the end of July. That was on the 15th. On the 18th even the most optimistic among us understood that all was lost. The history of the world was played out in three days."

General Foch was not the man to waste the effects of this physical and moral victory, neither did he allow the Germans a chance to recover. To be able to attack had been his one desire, and from this time the Allied armies were always on the offensive. As soon as the Château-Thierry salient had been eliminated, Foch attacked the other large salient in Picardy, which had been won by the Germans in their first drive in March. Attacks were first made by the French in the south and by the British in the north on a twenty-mile sector, August 8, 1918. On the two succeeding days the attacks widened to forty miles, and

<sup>1</sup> Colonel R. H. C. Kelton, General Staff, U. S. A.

the Allies drove back the Germans, and made reconquests of the terrain which had been lost in the great offensive.

Montdidier and Noyon were taken, and the attacks were extended north to the Scarpe with the result that Albert was soon occupied. The Allies continued to advance. The much-contested cities of Péronne and Bapaume were regained, and in the early days of September the Picardy salient had been abolished. In the Flanders sector also the gains made by the Germans had been eaten away.

It had been planned that the eventual place of the American army on the battle line would be east of Verdun, on the right of the Allied line. Owing to the congestion at the other French ports, it had been necessary for the United States to use the western ports in France for debarkation. Consequently the railway systems and supply depots could best be arranged for the southeastern part of the front. In the emergency it had been necessary to use the American troops elsewhere, but after the retreat of the Germans it was possible to return to the original plan.<sup>1</sup>

After the fight at Château-Thierry there was no longer any doubt about American troops in battle, no matter how short their training, and there was every confidence in their officers. The sector from Port sur Seille east of the Moselle to a front opposite Verdun was accordingly placed under the command of General Pershing. The American sector was afterwards extended west of Verdun across the Meuse to the Argonne. The American First Army was constituted<sup>2</sup> and it took position in this region. Included in this sector was the strong St. Mihiel salient, which had been held by the

<sup>1</sup> "It was apparent that the emergency which had justified the dispersion of our divisions had passed." General Pershing. Report.

<sup>2</sup> "After discussion, the question of employing the American army as a unit was conceded." General Pershing. Report.

Germans since 1914. The first task assigned to the new American army was the reduction of this salient.

The German positions at St. Mihiel had always been a bad spot for the Allies in the battle line, but the strength of the place had baffled the efforts of the French. At this time the Germans were not able to offer any such strong defense, but the attack was a thorough test of the newly formed American army on the field of battle. The operation, involving 550,000 troops, was performed in a way that removed the last doubt as to the ability of the Americans to coördinate in large numbers, and it also proved that the right system of tactics had been adopted by the American army.<sup>1</sup> The Americans showed their ability to overcome wire entanglements<sup>2</sup> and were skilful in taking advantage of the terrain to isolate and render untenable strong points, which the French had often attempted to carry by frontal attacks. The line about the salient was some forty miles. The German positions were carried in short order and the salient entirely cleared. (September 12-13.)

As a result of this series of offensive operations by the armies of General Foch, all danger to Paris<sup>3</sup> had disappeared, and the Germans had been driven from every position that interfered with the lateral communications of Foch's armies. From the time of the first counter attack on July 18 the offensive had re-

<sup>1</sup> "An American army was an accomplished fact, and the enemy had felt its power. No form of propaganda could overcome the depressing effect on the morale of the enemy of this demonstration of our ability to organize a large American force and drive it successfully through his defenses." General Pershing. Report.

<sup>2</sup> "For the first time wire entanglements ceased to be regarded as impassable barriers and open-warfare training, which had been so urgently insisted upon, proved to be the correct doctrine." General Pershing. Report.

<sup>3</sup> "The decisive help given in France by the United States, without which the Entente would long before have suffered a military defeat." Ludendorff.



mained with Foch, and the Germans had never been able to check the advance of his armies. Pursuing his policy of continued attack, General Foch promptly made preparations for an advance along the whole line from Verdun to the sea in the last week of September.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interesting and authoritative accounts of the A. E. F. operations at this crisis will be found in two articles by Colonel R. H. C. Kelton, U. S. A.: "The Miracle of Château-Thierry", in the *Century* for May, 1919, and "American Operations in France", in the *National Service Magazine* for September, 1919.

#### MAP NO. 21. THE TURN OF THE TIDE

(This map is diagrammatic only)

●●●●●●● Battle line at beginning of fifth attack in the German offensive July 15, 1918.

----- Limit of German gains to the southeast of Château-Thierry salient and east of Rheims in the assault of July 15, 1918.

Arrows indicate the first attacks of Foch's counter offensive July 18, 1918.

Shaded areas indicate the recovery by the Allies of terrain gained by the Germans in great offensive of 1918.

① Château-Thierry salient (July, 1918).

② Picardy salient (August, 1918).

③ Gains in Flanders (August, 1918).

④ St. Mihiel salient (September, 1918).

— Battle line September 25, 1918.







SCALE OF KILOMETRES

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE CENTRAL POWERS

#### SOCIAL REVOLUTION. THE SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN

THE effect of the German defeat in France was a shock that caused the whole edifice of the Central Powers to crumble and fall into ruins. As long as the Germans were winning they held their allies together, but at the touch of defeat their whole coalition collapsed. Of course such a sudden disintegration would not have taken place unless there had been other causes long at work to weaken the structure. These elements of weakness were also affecting Germany, whose armies were fighting with social revolution impending if they were defeated, but in the countries allied with Germany there was greater reason for the demoralization that came so quickly.

Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria had suffered much more from the war than had Germany. The war had come more closely home to their peoples. There had been more actual privation. In fact, in these countries there were almost famine conditions in the last year of the war. Their peoples were utterly tired of the war and longed for peace.

Another element that had undermined the structure, which Germany had so carefully built, was the unsettling effect of the revolution in Russia upon the neighboring peoples. The apparent success that Ger-



many had won against Russia did not gain the expected results, outside of removing an antagonist from the war. The treaty with the Bolsheviks was neither a well-ordered peace that would be of benefit to Germany, nor was it a conquest that would enable the conquerer to enforce the terms imposed upon the vanquished and to secure the spoils of victory.

At the time of the peace negotiations it had been believed that Germany would secure great quantities of foodstuffs through the conquest of Russia, but such calculations had not taken into account the chaos that prevailed in that country. To the Russian nation the so-called peace treaty did not bring the usual results of peace, as there continued to be internal troubles and fighting between the various groups of Russian revolutionists. This state of affairs prevented the Germans from establishing trade relations with the Russians and obtaining as great a quantity of supplies as was expected.

The separate treaty with the Ukraine was at first thought to be a master stroke on the part of the Germans, with the object of securing foodstuffs from the richest wheat fields in Europe. The peace pact was practically a bargain for the Ukraine wheat, but when it came to gaining the full benefit of the treaty, the Germans found that the revolutionists in the Ukraine were too busy in fights with other revolutionists to become diligent providers for Germany. Supplies were obtained to a considerable amount after the peace, but in this respect both the peace treaties were a great disappointment to the Germans.

There was another harmful result for Germany that came from the Russian revolution. Its doctrines spread through the neighboring countries, producing great demoralization and unrest. This disturbing influence even spread to Germany itself, and it increased the existing tension between the German people and

the German Government. The result was that the social upheaval in Russia, which had been abetted by the Germans, became a great factor in the destruction of the national organization which Germany had built up through so many years.

The Russian revolution had been fomented by Germany as a military means of putting an enemy out of action, but the subsequent effects upon Germany and upon the peoples of the allies of Germany had not been estimated.

Ludendorff writes: "How often had I not hoped for a revolution in order to lighten our military burden! . . . Now it had come as a surprise. . . . At that time I never contemplated the possibility that it might later on undermine our own strength also."<sup>1</sup>

Upon Austria-Hungary the effect of this disturbing element was especially marked. The Dual Empire had always been loosely knit, with jarring factions of Slav and Teutonic races. These existing enmities were quick to feel the influence of the successful social revolution near their borders, especially the tendency of communities to break away and set up governments for themselves. The cleavage between the different parts of the empire became more pronounced, and the states of the Czecho-Slovaks and Jugo-Slavs began to take form.

While Germany was winning victories in the spring of 1918, these causes of demoralization were only working under the surface, and the prestige of Germany still remained strong. A proof of this was the surrender of Rumania to the Germans at this time. This unfortunate nation made peace with Germany under very disadvantageous terms in May (preliminary peace treaty signed May 6), thus closing a career in the war in which every move had been made at the wrong time.

<sup>1</sup> "And the revolution Ludendorff started to undermine Russia ended in Germany and helped to her undoing." Foch.

Under the stimulus of the German victories Austria was induced to take the offensive against the Italians, and in June the Austrians seemed on the point of a new success, as they had forced the crossing of the Piave River against the Italian armies, but there were sudden floods along the Piave, which swept away their bridges and left the Austrians west of the river isolated and exposed to Italian counter attacks. This quickly changed a successful operation into an Austrian disaster, in which the Austrian losses were so heavy that there was no longer any danger for the Italian armies. These retained their positions extending from the Piave to the Asiago plateau (June 15-23, 1918), and there was no other important operation on this front until October.

Although the submarines had continued to sink great numbers of ships, the Germans could no longer indulge themselves in the hope that they were destined to win the war with the U-boats. The convoys were still uninterruptedly at work transporting the large numbers of American troops to France, and the many precautions taken against the submarines had brought good results in decreased reports of sinkings of cargo-carrying ships. With the greater efficiency of the patrolling craft, and the use of depth bombs, the U-boat was all the time operating with increasing danger to itself.

On the night of April 22-23 daring surprise attacks were made by the British Navy upon the two Flemish ports, Ostend and Zeebrugge, with the object of blockading the entrances of both harbors by sinking old ships filled with cement in the channels. These undertakings were carried out with great dash and intrepidity by the British. At Zeebrugge the blockships were grounded as planned; at Ostend they drifted slightly off the course. A few days later the *Vindictive*, an out-of-date cruiser, was sunk in the fairway at Ostend, with the result that this submarine base was also damaged.

A plan on a large scale for curbing the submarines was devised in the spring of 1918, and it was soon put into operation. The scheme comprised laying great barriers of mines to close in the North Sea, and by this means to prevent the submarines from making their way into the outside seas. One great barrage was laid extending from the Orkneys to the territorial waters of Norway, and another was drawn across the Straits of Dover. The British and American navies coöperated in this undertaking, but the greater part of the mine laying was done by the United States Navy.

In June, 1918, there was a raid upon the American coast by German submarines, which first appeared off the New Jersey coast on June 3. A number of vessels were destroyed, most of them small craft, but there was no serious interruption of the transportation of troops to France, as was shown by the great number taken across in that month (278,664). Neither was there any attempt at the "blockade" of American ports which had been threatened by the Germans.

After the Battle of Jutland there was no other battle of fleets. There had been anticipations that there would be another engagement sought by the Germans, and the British Grand Fleet had been reinforced by a strong squadron of American battleships under Rear Admiral Rodman. Against this great British and American fleet the Germans never ventured into action, although, contrary to general opinion, the German fleet occasionally came out into the North Sea. Admiral Rodman states that on one occasion the Grand Fleet "came within a few miles of cutting off from its base and engaging the German fleet."

From being so much in port the German sailors were more in touch with the German people than were the soldiers on duty with the German armies. Consequently, when revolutionary ideas began to spread among the people and the popular discontent was



brought to a head by defeat, the German Navy was infected by the revolutionary spirit. It gradually became demoralized, and then openly mutinous. Whatever intention there might have been in the German Navy of fighting a last desperate battle was set at naught by this mutinous condition of the crews of the German warships, and the morale of the German Navy deteriorated until, at the time of the internment, the German ships were slovenly, disorderly craft, ruled by councils of sailors, and such officers as were left in the fleet were merely on board the ships on sufferance.

There was no such demoralization in the German armies, although their morale had deteriorated. The German soldiers continued to fight, and there were no routs nor panics, but the former fighting spirit was gone. Behind the armies the German people broke into revolt as the German defeats continued, and under these circumstances the armies did not offer the same strong and united resistance.

Among the armies of the allies of Germany there was soon widespread demoralization. Added to the popular discontent with the war and its hardships, there was a great reaction against Germany. In the countries that had been drawn into the war to help the ambitions of Germany there was a realization that they had been used as tools by the Germans. The people and the armies of Austria-Hungary felt that they had been abandoned by Germany. Turkey and Bulgaria saw that they had been helped by the Germans only so long as they were useful to Germany.

Germany's prestige had been destroyed by defeat. Her allies had become estranged from her. Their peoples and their armies were demoralized. In September, when Foch was preparing for his last great assault upon the German armies, each of Germany's allies was ready to go down in defeat at the first blow of a hostile military force.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE FINAL CAMPAIGNS<sup>1</sup>

ON September 26 the great final battle began on the Western front, and soon there was fighting all along the line from Verdun to the sea. In the same month Bulgaria was quickly put out of the war. The Saloniki army completed its guardianship of the Balkan region by striking the final blow at this ally of Germany. There was an advance on a front of one hundred miles from Monastir to Lake Doiran, with the Greeks and Serbians coöperating. There was hardly any resistance offered by the Bulgarian army. The Bulgarians were tired of war, and they had no idea of prolonging the struggle. The Allied armies advanced at will, and on September 27 Bulgaria asked for an armistice. On the last of the month the terms of the Entente Allies were accepted. These terms included occupation of the Bulgarian railroads. This meant that the communication between the Central Powers and Turkey had been broken, and the last vestige of the German *Mittel Europa* had been destroyed. The Italian army in Albania also took the offensive, and Albania was cleared of the enemy.

At the same time the British in Palestine were striking heavy blows against the remaining Turkish troops. The Turks were as tired of the war as the Bulgarians had been. They were angry with Germany, and with the pro-German party in Turkey. They had been practically abandoned by Germany, and their troops were no longer equipped and organized by the

<sup>1</sup> See Map No. 22 at the end of this chapter.

Germans. In the middle of September the British broke up the Turkish defense in the Holy Land, capturing at once twenty-five thousand troops. General Allenby's army followed up this success, and the Turkish troops were routed. Damascus was taken, and this opened the way to the final Turkish defeat, by cutting the line of the Constantinople-Bagdad Railway at Aleppo, which was taken October 26.

This meant that the Turkish troops in Mesopotamia were cut off from supplies, and all the Turkish forces were helpless. On October 31 an armistice was signed that amounted to an unconditional surrender. The first article in the armistice comprised the opening of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus and access to the Black Sea. This ended the Turkish domination of the Dardanelles, which had been maintained for so many years, and which had done so much harm.

October also saw the collapse of Austria-Hungary. Affairs in the Dual Empire had gone from bad to worse with great rapidity. The infection of the Russian revolution had spread through all its States, and there was no longer any semblance of unity in the Empire, to say nothing of any united effort to carry on the war. There were bad conditions all over the country. The people were hungry and desperate. There was disaffection and revolt everywhere. These conditions spread to the Austrian armies which were still far in Venetia in the positions facing the Piave and on the Asiago plateau. In this region there had not been any military change of note since the disastrous defeat of the Austrian offensive on the Piave in June.

The Austrian armies were also hungry and disaffected; their morale was gone; and they were ready to break at the first assault. On October 24 the Italians attacked between the Brenta and the Piave and along the lower Piave. The result was never at any time in doubt. All along the line the Austrians gave way

in a retreat that soon became a rout. There was not a trace left of the formidable armies that had defeated the Italians and held their own so long in Venetia. The invaders were captured in droves, and the Austrian armies were destroyed in a few days. There remained nothing but a mob of struggling fugitives, a great part of whom were captured. Their guns and equipment had been abandoned to the Italians.

At this time all Austria-Hungary was in revolution, and the Emperor gave orders to form a "liquidation ministry" to transfer the power of government from the Empire to the various States, and at the same time instructions were given to make a surrender to the Entente Allies. An armistice was requested October 29, and it was signed November 3. This was followed by the abdication of the Emperor, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire had become a number of separate States.

In the meantime Germany was also going down to defeat, although there was no such military collapse as in the case of her three allies. The great offensive launched by Foch was initiated by a drive of the American army on the sector from the Meuse to the western edge of the Argonne (September 26). The French also attacked in the Champagne on the same day. This offensive was followed on the next day by an attack by the British toward Cambrai. On successive days there were strong assaults in Flanders by the British and Belgians, and an attack in force toward St. Quentin.

All of these offensives gained ground at once, and it was evident that the Germans could not muster strength to oppose the advance. At last Foch securely possessed the offensive all along his line, and with all the dynamic energy that was innate in his generalship he kept up his attacks upon his enemies. Foch has given the following characteristic description of his



favorite offensive: "Here is an inclined plane. An attack is like this ball rolling down it. It is gaining momentum and getting faster and faster on condition you don't stop it. If you check it artificially anywhere, you lose all your momentum and have to start all over again."

The Commander-in-Chief also knew the conditions under which the Germans were then fighting and that defeat for the German armics meant revolution. "I knew nothing could balk me of victory once the Germans had accepted the final battle where they did. One thing only could have delayed defeat for them. That was to get all their forces everywhere behind the Meuse. . . . But they wouldn't do it. Why? Because it would have been an open confession of defeat, and they dared not face the moral effect of that at home."<sup>1</sup>

It must be kept in mind that these operations pivoted upon the region of Verdun. It was the reverse of the campaign of 1914, in which the German right was advanced in a wide sweep through Belgium into France. In the campaign of 1918 the only recourse of the Germans was to fall back over the same ground, without yielding too much at the pivoting point. The hinge of the pivot was the position assigned to the American army for attack in the Meuse-Argonne region.<sup>2</sup> "The enemy must hold fast to this part of his lines or the withdrawal of his forces with four years' accumulation of plants and material would be dangerously imperiled."<sup>3</sup>

In this Meuse-Argonne offensive, in spite of great German efforts, American attacks continued to gain ground from the first, and they were kept up with a constant pressure that also had effect upon the other parts of the line. "Our dogged offensive was wearing down the enemy who continued desperately to throw his

<sup>1</sup> Foch.

<sup>2</sup> "The hinge of the Allied offensive." Pershing.

<sup>3</sup> Pershing.

best troops against us, thus weakening his line in front of our Allies and making their advance less difficult."<sup>1</sup>

It must be understood that the Meuse-Argonne offensive was the deciding operation of the final campaign. It was known that it would be necessary for the Germans to resist with all their strength in this region. On their right they could fall back without disaster, but to be driven back by the American assault meant the end of German military power. It was also true that the French Command did not believe it was possible to make any great advance against so strong a defense. The result achieved went beyond the expectations of European military experts, and hastened the end of the war. General Pershing's report is explicit: "It should be recorded that, although this general offensive was fully outlined at the conference, no one present expressed the opinion that the final victory could be won in 1918. In fact it was believed by the French High Command that the Meuse-Argonne attack could not be pushed much beyond Montfaucon before the arrival of winter would force a cessation of operations."

In spite of this unfavorable opinion the United States army made constant gains in its offensive. In this operation 1,200,000 American troops were used,<sup>2</sup> which became an increasing menace to the important German railroad communications through Mézières and Sedan. With the Germans vainly battling to avoid this danger, all of Foch's drives made uninterrupted gains, helped by the diversion of German troops to this important sector.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pershing.

<sup>2</sup> Statistical Summary. Ayers, General Staff.

<sup>3</sup> "Between the Argonne and the Meuse the Americans had broken into our positions. They had assembled a powerful army in this region, and their part of the campaign became more and more important." Ludendorff.

"From the moment the American offensive began until the armistice his defense was desperate and the flow of his divisions to our front was continuous." General Pershing. Report.

As a result of the constant pressure of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the withdrawal of the right of the German line had become rapid. The German battle front, as it swung back, was the radius of a circle, and consequently greater areas were abandoned on the widened arc. It can be seen that each kilometer yielded by the Germans near the pivot involved a multiplied distance that must be given up nearer the outer rim of the circle. Lens and Armentières were evacuated October 3. Cambrai was captured on October 9, and on the fourteenth Laon and La Fère were evacuated by the Germans. On October 17 the Allies were in Lille, and they had advanced along the Belgian coast beyond Ostend and Zeebrugge, the two submarine bases for which the costly Battle of Flanders had been vainly fought in 1917. Farther south there had been stronger resistance, but the Germans had retreated beyond St. Quentin, and the French, having crossed the Chemin des Dames, were advancing in the Champagne.

It had become evident, even to the most obsessed of the German militarists, that it was impossible to withstand the new strength of the Allied and American armies. The German leaders had bowed to the inevitable, and on October 7 an official note had been received from the Germans asking for an armistice. This was at once rejected, and Germany was informed that all invaded territory must be evacuated before there could be any talk of a truce. Foch's armies continued to push their offensives. On the right of the Germans their rapid advance was maintained against a diminishing resistance. The Germans still fought hard west of Verdun, but the Franco-American forces steadily advanced toward the German railway communications, which were threatened as the Americans approached Sedan.

In the meantime in Germany the German defeats had produced the expected result, — a social revolu-

tion. The discontent of the German people had become an open revolt.<sup>1</sup> Peace was demanded in the Reichstag, and the military control of Germany was denounced. Ludendorff, who was held responsible for the continuance of the war,<sup>2</sup> was forced to resign in the last week of October. There began to be an insistent demand that the Kaiser should abdicate. A decree announcing the Kaiser's support of reforms had the date of October 28, but it was too late to save the Imperial German Government.

Disorders spread throughout the country, and red flags began to appear in the German cities. The mutinous sailors of the German Navy gained control of the bases of Kiel, Wilhelmshaven, Heligoland, Borkum, and Cuxhaven. The Imperial flags were hauled down on the ships, and the red flags of the revolution were hoisted in their place. The revolt spread to Berlin, and on November 9 the Kaiser abdicated, taking refuge in Holland.

Before the abdication a German delegation had been sent to treat for an armistice. The war party had attempted to delay the departure of this mission, but Hindenburg himself had declared that there was no other course, and that any delay in obtaining peace would be harmful. This ended the last hope of prolonging resistance, and the final negotiations for an armistice were carried on by the new German Government.

General Foch's armies had been steadily pushing forward while these events were in progress. In the last days the Americans were at Sedan, and the British, at the outer end of the receding radius, were near

<sup>1</sup> "With its back against the wall of its home, the best of Germany stood fighting for its life, when suddenly the wall was overthrown from behind, and the people lost their control and fell into delirium." Tirpitz. "My Memoirs."

<sup>2</sup> "The grievous reproach that I have carried on the war like an unscrupulous gambler." Ludendorff.



Mons, the point from which the forward swing had begun in 1914. Knowing that the German military leaders might shift at any favorable turn, General Foch urged his generals to keep up the pressure until the last. General Foch's orders were insistent upon this point, and there is no foundation for insinuations that our troops were engaged longer than was necessary.<sup>1</sup>

The Armistice was signed, and became effective at 11 A.M., November 11, 1918 — and the hostilities of The World War were ended. Discussion as to what might have happened, if the war had been prolonged, is outside the province of this book. But it should be stated that, although the military position of the German armies was hopeless for successfully carrying on the war, it was a mistake to assume that the Armistice saved the German armies from a débâcle. General Foch's statement is clear on this point: "But they had behind them the line of the Sarre, where we should have had to pause again. To have launched that attack would mean one victory the more, but that is all, and we got by the armistice everything we could have gained by the battle."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Telegram from General Foch, November 9, 1918, 9 P.M.

"It is important to co-ordinate and expedite our movements.

"I appeal to the energy and initiative of the commanders-in-chief and of their armies to make decisive the results obtained."

<sup>2</sup> Sir Douglas Haig in his published dispatch ("Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches") uses almost the same words, showing that the British and French Commands were agreed in this: "On the other hand, the Armistice in effect amounted to complete surrender by the enemy, and all that could have been gained by fighting came into our hands more speedily and at less cost."

## MAP NO. 22. THE LAST CAMPAIGN

(This map is diagrammatic only)

— Battle line on September 25, 1918.

*Groups of Allied and Associated Armies.*

A. Belgian and French.

B. British, General Haig.

C. Northern French Armies, General Fayolle.

D. Central French Armies, General Maistre.

E. American, General Pershing.

F. Eastern French, General Castlenau.

*Groups of German Armies.*

G. Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria.

H. German Crown Prince.

I. General Gallwitz.

J. Duke Albrecht of Württemberg.

①① French and American offensives in the Champagne and Meuse-Argonne (September 26, 1918).

② British attack toward Cambrai (September 27, 1918).

③ Joint attack in Flanders (September 28, 1918).

④ Attack toward St. Quentin (September 29, 1918).

Small arrows indicate progress of the offensives at the time of the Armistice, November 11, 1918.







## APPENDIX

### AMERICAN TACTICS IN THE WORLD WAR

By courtesy of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts.  
*Read before the Society February 5, 1918.*

ALTHOUGH it is known in a general way that American tactics are being used in The World War, few realize that this war is dominated by tactics and weapons which had their origin in America. On land the European formal battles and formal fortresses have been superseded by armies manœuvring and intrenching, as developed in our American wars. On the sea, American ideas have been even more universally adopted. It may be truthfully said that, in their effects on tactics and weapons of warfare, our three wars, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War, are beyond comparison.

Our War for Independence, the American Revolution, was one of the most extraordinary in history, when one considers the great results achieved almost without resources. Unusual conditions on land and sea existed at the beginning of this struggle, which was destined to differ in tactics from any previous war, and for such a war on land and sea the Colonists were well prepared. This is very little understood, even by those who have some historical knowledge; but a careful study of the history of the Revolution shows that, although the Colonists were poor in resources at the outbreak of the war, the American soldiers and sailors had already been schooled in the qualities that gave them victory.

On land, the idea that "embattled farmers" sprang forth fully armed is wrong from every historical point of view. The so-called "French wars" had given our people the right preparation for the Revolution. Scattered through all the Colonies were officers and men who had served in the French and Indian War. Consequently, from Washington down,



through the personnel of our Continental Army, were men who had learned the lesson of tactics adapted to this continent. They had also learned, many of them from bitter experience, that such tactics were very effective against the Regular Army.

On the other hand, the conduct of the War of the Revolution by the Royal Army shows plainly enough that they had not learned their lesson. The contrast between the failure of the Regulars under Braddock and the effective work of the Provincials at Lake George was forgotten. The final victory of Wolfe at Quebec, where Montcalm reverted to European tactics and gave battle on the Plains of Abraham, summed up the French and Indian War in the mind of the British Army — a triumph for the Regulars!

As a result of this, it was not the professional Regular soldier who was prepared for the Revolutionary War. It was the Colonist who was prepared. In the end this outweighed all the resources that could be brought against the revolt.

On land, the Revolutionary War was really decided the day the first shot was fired, when an action was fought that was prophetic of great changes of tactics. The Lexington and Concord fight showed the helplessness of the old formal school against a line of battle in extended order, taking advantage of every natural shelter, never giving a set battle, but attacking, here, there, and everywhere. A column of Regulars, supposed to be strong enough to march anywhere in the Colony, barely escaped under the cover of reinforcements. From that day the Regular Army never dared to venture into the country unless in overwhelming force. Even at that, the war was a repetition of the same thing. Saratoga was Lexington on a larger scale.

But the best example of such tactics was the campaign of Greene in the Carolinas, which finally drove Cornwallis into Virginia and eventually into Yorktown. Greene made the country what Cornwallis called a "hornet's nest." Sometimes Greene's army was united, at other times it would be divided into partisan bands, but always attacking and harassing the Regulars, yet not giving Cornwallis the chance to force the Americans into a set battle. Worried and menaced everywhere, Cornwallis did not know which way to turn.

In desperation he detached Tarleton against Greene's lieutenant, Morgan, who led Tarleton into a trap and destroyed his force. Stung to anger by this disaster, Cornwallis moved against Greene, who drew him several hundred miles from his base, and so weakened his army that he gave up his campaign, and moved into Virginia.

The American tactics of avoiding formal battles, keeping their weaker army in the field, and constantly wearing down the enemy, won the campaign. The European tactics of trying to force a set battle, and retiring with a weaker army into a fortress, resulted in the capture of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Within two months after Lexington, another epoch-making action was fought — the Battle of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775.

A weak earthwork had been thrown up in the night, by the Provincials, threatening the Royal troops in Boston. The few hundred men who defended it might have been easily cut off, but a greatly superior force of the best troops in the British Army attempted to storm this position, and succeeded in taking it only after the ammunition of the defenders was exhausted. The British losses were nearly equal to the numbers of the Americans. The reason is plain. It was an intrenchment defended by weapons of precision.

At that time drilled troops of all nations "presented" their pieces and fired. Their muskets were not even sighted. The Provincials, who defended the intrenchment, were all skilled marksmen. Every man aimed at an individual enemy. Such a deadly fire had never been experienced in European warfare.

The resultant awful loss made such a deep impression on the Regular Army that intrenchments defended by Americans were ever after objects of great respect. Washington's army at Valley Forge marked the lowest ebb of our military strength. That army would have been an easy prey, if the Royal Army had ventured an attack — but the menace of intrenchments defended by weapons of precision was too great. This respect of the Regular Army for Americans in intrenchments was of great tactical value to us throughout the war.

On the sea the Colonists had another element of preparedness which is not generally appreciated. Nowhere in the world were there hardier and more intelligent seamen. Their

ships had been on every ocean, and American designers were already noted for the speed of their ships. American sailors all over the world had gained the experience that was destined to make them so resourceful against their enemies. Many of them had seen fighting in every kind of naval warfare. They were thus especially well equipped for war against a superior naval power, in which ingenuity and daring were necessary qualities. The same irregular, harassing tactics, which were successful on land, were adopted by the Americans on the sea.

With the poor resources at their command, the Colonists could not hope for a strong navy, and the number of ships commissioned in the United States Navy was small. The British control of the sea was absolute, and the seas about Great Britain were patrolled by her great fleet; but, with the enterprising American seaman, it was no question of being daunted by this superior force, or of playing the game of the enemy.

American naval vessels boldly sailed into these well guarded seas, and actually harried the British coasts. These raids, culminating in the exploits of Paul Jones and the fight off Flamborough Head, had a serious effect on the British public. The amount of actual damage was small, but the fact that landings had been made on their coasts upset for the first time the idea of complete control of the seas.

Our Navy also did damage to British commerce, and here another class of American ships was of great tactical value. As there were so few naval ships to give service to our seamen, private enterprise began to fit out ships. Soon a swarm of privateers was scattered over the seas preying on the British merchant marine, and for the first time commerce-destroying became a determining factor in war.

Privateering before this had been carried on in the wars between the British and the French; but it had been a matter of give and take, with profit to many merchants of each nation. It is doubtful if it ever affected the result either way. But in the Revolutionary War it was another thing. British commerce was devastated with no chance of equal damage to the Americans.

English insurance rates were raised, and merchants were even deterred from shipping goods at any rate of insurance. The American privateers captured or destroyed about six

hundred ships of the value of eighteen million dollars — very great losses for those days.

"In all the memorials presented to Parliament the argument used to bring about peace was the unprecedented destruction of English commerce,"<sup>1</sup> and many authorities believe this argument of commerce-destroying by the United States Navy and American privateers did more to gain independence than any other factor in the war.

Probably, however, the most extraordinary event in the Revolution, in relation to the present war, was the first use of the torpedo and the submarine. Various forms of mines had been tried before with indifferent success, but nothing approaching the torpedo as used in the present war.

In 1775 David Bushnell, of Connecticut, who graduated from Yale that year, built the "diving boat" known as the "American Turtle." Its design was astonishingly modern in many ways. It was made of iron plates, propelled by a screw, and guided by a compass made visible by phosphorus. The torpedo was carried outside, to be attached to the enemy ship, and then cast loose. The action of casting off started a clockwork, which gave the submarine time to get away to a safe distance.

This submarine and torpedo were first tried against the *Eagle*, a sixty-four-gun ship, lying off New York. The operator in the submarine found difficulty in attaching the torpedo, which contained one hundred pounds of powder, and the explosion was not near enough to the *Eagle* to cause any damage. It was again tried against the *Cerberus* at New London. The submarine missed the large ship, but blew up a schooner that lay near her, with several of her people killed. It was Bushnell who in 1778 set afloat torpedoes against the British shipping in the Delaware River near Philadelphia. They were in kegs and did little damage, but inspired the amusing poem, "The Battle of the Kegs," written at the time.

These attempts with the submarine and the torpedo, although they did very little actual harm, caused so much alarm and kept the enemy ships away from narrow waters to such an extent that it is perfectly fair to say that the submarine and the torpedo had a tactical value in the Revolution.

<sup>1</sup> Maclay.



Consequently it may be said that in this war were found the germs of some of the most important tactics and weapons of the present war.

On land : —

The mobile army in the field, and the end of formal battles.

The tactical use of intrenchments defended by weapons of precision.

On the sea : —

The tactical use of the submarine.

The tactical use of the torpedo.

Commerce-destroying as a factor in war.

Raids upon an enemy's coast by a weaker navy.

The War of 1812 found the Americans totally unprepared on land. The generation of the American Revolution had passed away, and there was no element in the population with any experience in war, except a few Indian-fighters in the western part of the United States. The wretched showing of the Americans on land was a natural result. The often cited Battle of New Orleans was only the mistake of Bunker Hill repeated by an over-confident British general, who attempted the tactics of the Peninsular War against intrenchments defended by expert marksmen.

On the sea, things were very different. Our seamen had become even more expert in the interval between the two wars; our ships had maintained their superiority in speed, and our privateers repeated the damage of the Revolution, but on a larger scale. The American privateers captured or destroyed in this war no less than thirteen hundred ships of the value of thirty-nine million dollars. Such losses were unprecedented, and this destruction of commerce again won us an advantageous peace.

The following from the London "Times" is enough to show the effect of these losses on the public mind: "Lloyd's list contains notices of upward of five hundred British vessels captured in seven months by the Americans. Five hundred merchantmen and three frigates! Can these statements be true? And can the English people hear them unmoved?" The reference to the loss of "three frigates" is a comment on another offensive developed by the Americans on the sea, which was the beginning of great changes in naval tactics.

At the outbreak of the War of 1812 the United States Navy had only the following ships in commission : —

President, frigate . . . . .	44 guns
Constitution, frigate . . . . .	44 "
United States, frigate . . . . .	44 "
Constellation, frigate . . . . .	36 "
Chesapeake, frigate . . . . .	36 "
Congress, frigate . . . . .	36 "
Essex, frigate . . . . .	32 "
Adams, corvette . . . . .	28 "
John Adams, corvette . . . . .	28 "
Wasp, sloop . . . . .	18 "
Hornet, sloop . . . . .	18 "
Argus, brig . . . . .	16 "
Siren, brig . . . . .	16 "
Enterprise, schooner . . . . .	12 "
Nautilus, schooner . . . . .	12 "
Vixen, schooner . . . . .	10 "
Viper, schooner . . . . .	10 "

It was not thought possible that such a weak fleet would make any showing against the powerful British Navy, but in this small navy were concentrated skilled officers and men, making up a personnel probably never before equalled. As was natural in such a picked body of men, excellent methods of seamanship and gunnery had been developed, superior to those used by the officers and crews of the men-of-war of the time. The United States Navy had gained experience of warfare in the Tripolitan War, etc., and it was far ahead of its time in construction and armament.

Our naval constructors, with an intuition almost prophetic, had built a class of frigates, of which the *Constitution* is best known, and placed long twenty-four-pounders on them. Such an armament was ridiculed abroad, and it was predicted that these ships would be useless — but in the War of 1812 these frigates became the wonder of the world.

The British frigates were simply overwhelmed, and the individual superiority of this class of frigates was never overcome in the war. Another extract from the "Times" shows again the state of the public mind: "The fact seems to be established that the Americans have some superior mode of firing." The "fact" that the "Times" could not understand was the great advance in naval construction shown by these frigates of the United States Navy. This advanced design

by American naval constructors was the birth of the "all-big-gun-ship" idea, which was destined to dominate naval construction; and the *Constitution* may fairly be called the ancestor of the modern dreadnought.

It is true that these frigates had the great advantage of being manned by an unusual personnel, skilled in advanced methods. But it must also be understood that this design was a long stride toward the development of the warship into a mobile platform for heavy guns, possessing fleet speed in contrast to the floating battery idea. This was a gain of power by increasing the size of the gun, instead of following the prevailing naval fashion for increasing the number of guns of a size considered suitable for the type of warship. Contrary to expert naval opinion abroad, our Navy solved the problem of handling the top-heavy weight of the battery, and these frigates possessed a decisive superiority that placed any other class of frigates at a hopeless disadvantage.

In the War of 1812 the American inventions of the torpedo and the submarine were of tactical value, although not in actual use. Robert Fulton had attempted to develop the Bushnell inventions, for the French and for the English; but he had returned to America discouraged. There was some aid voted for his machines, but nothing was ever done with them in actual warfare. However, as in the Revolution, the idea that the Americans possessed such dangerous weapons proved a good defense for portions of our coast in this war.

But it was in the Civil War that these germs of American tactics attained a development that revolutionized warfare. To understand the Civil War it should be kept in mind that, from the first outbreak of secession, a military situation existed that made the grand tactics of the Civil War sound. This was not from any definite plans of any generals; but the efforts to keep the Border States in the Union, to save West Virginia, Missouri, and the Unionists of Tennessee, with the necessity of getting control of the Mississippi River, and the blockade of the Southern coast, all meant the beginning of the envelopment that in the end strangled the Confederacy. Consequently the problem was for the North to constrict, for the South to break the circle; and the resulting tactics had the right basis, in spite of mistakes by commanders on both sides.

The early battles of the Civil War followed, in general, European tactics. It was natural, however, where armies of such great intelligence in both officers and men were contending, with no traditions to hamper them and a sound basis of strategy for both sides, that new tactics should be developed. The outstanding feature of the campaigns of the Civil War was the tactical use of what are known as "hasty intrenchments." These intrenching tactics were a new factor in warfare. "The art of constructing and using hasty intrenchments on the field of battle is a contribution from America to the war knowledge of the world."<sup>1</sup>

Intrenchments are as old as fighting, and were constantly used in European warfare, notably in Marlborough's wars. Such trenches were, however, formally planned and laid out by engineers. Whenever an army "came out of its trenches," or was "driven out of its trenches," the trenches ceased to be a factor. The idea that an army might move, and literally take its trenches with it, was the product of the Civil War.

Like the men of the Lexington fight, the intelligent American soldiers of both armies began to take advantage of all natural shelters. The next step, at the battle of Gaines' Mill, was using rails, logs, trees, etc. Then followed the use of the spade to help out such improvised shelters, until, later in the war, armies manœuvred, digging themselves in and thus strengthening their positions, as a matter of course.

All of this was a gradual development of American ingenuity, not the inspiration of any tactician.

Sherman's wonderful campaign against Atlanta is the great example of hasty intrenchments reaching definite strategic value. Sherman intrenched and threw out turning forces around his enemy's flank. As a result of these tactics, repeated again and again, the Confederates were compelled to abandon positions that would have caused prohibitive losses to direct assaults, and finally they were forced to evacuate Atlanta.

In Grant's last campaigns against Lee, from the Wilderness to Petersburg, the use of hasty intrenchments was perfected. In May, 1864, Grant moved against Lee, who intrenched against him with a greatly inferior army in the

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Arthur L. Wagner, U. S. A., *Papers of Mass. Mil. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 13.



Wilderness. The campaign that followed was a series of attacks, and moves to turn Lee's right by Grant. Lee, beating off direct attacks on his trenches, moved to the right whenever Grant attempted to outflank him, and kept his army steadily between the Federals and Richmond. Each army intrenched as it moved, Grant attacking from his trenches whenever he thought there might be an opening, Lee defending by counter-attacks. The armies, thus facing one another, swung to Cold Harbor — and then came the final deadlock and long struggle at Petersburg.

These were not battles in the European sense of the word. The Wilderness, Spottsylvania, North Anna, and Cold Harbor were all a series of attacks and counter attacks of armies intrenching against one another in each manoeuvre. Petersburg was the same with the armies brought to a standstill, trench against trench.

Formal fortresses, in the European meaning of the word, were not used in the Civil War. The superiority of earthworks and intrenchments was too evident. These Civil War tactics have dominated the present war, and, if we can believe the lessons of the war, the day of formal battles and formal fortresses has passed.

It seems strange at first glance that Europe did not realize the value of the tactics thus developed in the Civil War. But the prestige of Napoleon remained too overpowering for Europe even to consider innovations from America. The great Emperor fought against general staffs and generals imbued with the book-lore of war. He was infinitely better at their own game. Much of his superiority lay in his knowledge of what his enemy would do under conditions governed by existing tactics. At Austerlitz the Emperor's order told his army just what the plan of the enemy would be. Why should he have changed the game? Yet who knows what he might have done had new tactics been necessary?

Consequently European tactics remained unchanged. Only five years after the Civil War came the Franco-German War. In spite of an inefficient staff and bad generalship, the French Army fought hard and maintained its organization. After gallant efforts in the field to repel the systematically planned German onslaughts, it was drawn into fortresses where capture was only a matter of days.

It is no exaggeration to say that Woerth and Gravelotte might have been another story if American intrenching tactics had been followed. To quote again from Colonel Wagner: "The defense of the village of Froeschweiler by a French brigade against the frontal attacks of a German army corps showed what MacMahon might have done had his whole position been intrenched . . . the sun might have set upon a field of French victory [Gravelotte] had Bazaine taken heed of the lesson so plainly taught in the American War."

Lee was dead — but if Sherman or Grant could have commanded the French Army, kept it in the field, and used the intrenching tactics of the Civil War, would the Moltke campaign have gone through like clockwork? The present war, using the tactics of Sherman, Grant, and Lee, is the answer to this question.

Such tactics were first used to some extent in Europe by Skobeloff and Osman Pasha in the Russo-Turkish War, and increasingly in the Russo-Japanese War and the wars in the Balkans. In the present war these American tactics have been so universally accepted, that we are forced to the conclusion that the old systems have been discarded. There seems to be no future possibility of the formal battle of European tactics. The formal fortress has been proved not only useless, but a death trap; and the use of "hasty intrenchments" has become the basis of the tactics of to-day. Many forms of such intrenchments have been devised — but the factors in the war are mobile armies, manoeuvring and taking shelter — attacking, defending, and counter attacking from "hasty intrenchments."

On the sea the Civil War also brought about great changes in tactics. Before this war, in the same spirit of progress that had placed the heavy guns on the *Constitution*, the United States Navy had built steam frigates which had the most powerful armaments of their class. The U. S. S. *Niagara* carried twelve eleven-inch guns. This American idea of mounting heavier guns on warships, instead of adhering to the policy of increasing the number of guns, led naturally to the use of heavy guns on armored ships by both sides in the Civil War.

The attack in Hampton Roads on the Union fleet by the *Merrimac*, converted into the casemate ironclad *Virginia* by the Confederates, showed decisively the helplessness of

wooden ships against armored ships. The fight that followed the next day between the *Virginia* and the first turret ship, the *Monitor*, was the first challenge to big guns in casemates by big guns in turrets. The construction of the epoch-making *Monitor* had been hurried,<sup>1</sup> and she was defective in many ways. Consequently, although the *Monitor* saved the Union fleet, the question of superiority between the two types remained undecided in many minds.

The less known fight in Wassaw Sound in 1863 established the superiority of a few big guns in turrets over a greater number in casemates. The *Atlanta*, a Confederate casemate ironclad of the type of the *Virginia*, came out to destroy two monitors, with two excursion steamers to watch the destruction. The monitor *Weehawken* fired just five shots — and the contest was ended for all time in favor of big guns in turrets. The all-big-gun ship commands the sea in this war — and the big guns in turrets have never been supplanted.

In the *Monitor* type from one to two turrets was but a step, and many such monitors were built. Then came the *Roanoke* (1863), another stage in the development of the monitor. The *Roanoke* was a "sea-going turret vessel" with three turrets, all aligned over the keel. Here were the essentials of the dreadnought of to-day,<sup>2</sup> and this American design of big guns mounted in turrets, aligned over the keel, has prevailed over all other types of armored warships.

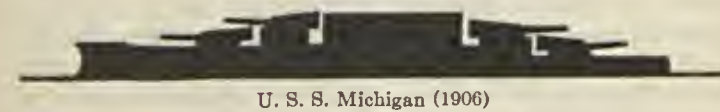
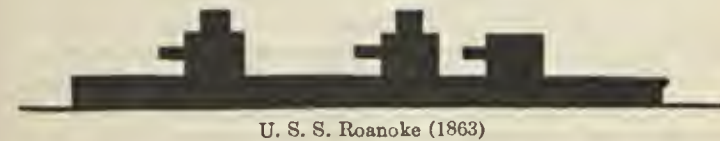
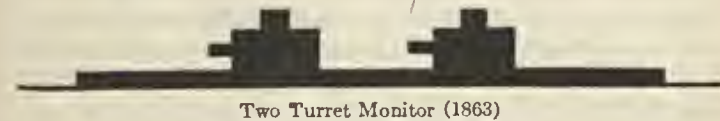
Foreign navies have been reluctant to accept this design. They have built all kinds of armored ships, and on their turret vessels have used various arrangements of the turrets. English and German dreadnoughts, the most recent development of battleships, have other dispositions of the turrets; but, in the latest classes of dreadnoughts, all foreign naval constructors have conformed to the American design of turrets aligned over the keel, from which we have never swerved in mounting our heavy guns. The turret-plan diagrams show this American development of the modern dread-

<sup>1</sup> Launched January 30, 1862, 100 days after keel was laid. Commissioned February 25, 1862; fought battle March 9, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> "For one nowadays to see a drawing of the battery plan of the U.S.S. *Roanoke* is to be reminded that there is nothing new under the sun." (Lieutenant-Commander W. P. Cronan, U.S.N., *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*.)

nought, which makes the design of the U. S. S. *Michigan* one of the great steps in naval construction.

From the *Constitution*, to the *Niagara*, to the *Monitor*, to the *Roanoke*, to the *Michigan*, to the *Pennsylvania*, are but steps in the American idea of the all-big-gun ship.



In the Civil War there was also a great development of the torpedo and of the submarine. The use of the torpedoes by the Confederates was of real tactical value to them. Their torpedoes were placed, as are mines in the present war, to protect narrow waters and harbors. Covered by artillery fire, these mine-fields undoubtedly proved a good defense in many cases against the superior naval power of the North. Many Federal warships were destroyed by them, among these the monitors *Tecumseh* and *Patapsco*. In fact they were a forerunner of the great mine-fields which defended the German bases against the stronger British fleet.

There was also developed a tactical use of the torpedo as a weapon of offense, the Confederate ram *Albemarle* being the most important warship so destroyed. The *Albemarle* was torpedoed in Cushing's daring night attack. As is well known, with a volunteer crew he attacked in a launch, with



his torpedo rigged on a spar and exploded by pulling a lanyard.

The Confederates also made great strides in the development of the submarine. Under-sea boats approaching the modern type were used, especially at Charleston. One design had an engine, and ran along awash with the surface of the sea, carrying its torpedo thrust out from the bow on a spar. This was called a "David," but the best-known Confederate submarine was the boat built at Mobile by Horace L. Huntley, after whom the craft was named. It was designated as a "submarine torpedo-boat" by General Beauregard in an order at Charleston;<sup>1</sup> and this general's description of the *H. L. Huntley* shows that it deserved the title, even in the modern sense of the words:—

"It was shaped like a fish, made of galvanized iron, was twenty feet long, and at the middle three and a half feet wide and five feet deep. From its shape it came to be known as the 'fish torpedo-boat.' Propelled by a screw worked from the inside by seven or eight men, it was so contrived that it could be submerged and worked under water for several hours, and to this end was provided with a fin on each side, worked also from the interior. By depressing the points of these fins the boat, when in motion, was made to descend and by elevating them it was made to rise. Light was afforded through the means of bull's eyes placed in the manholes."<sup>2</sup>

This submarine was very dangerous for its crews. On a tablet of the monument at Charleston the inscription begins: "Of more than thirty men drowned in this desperate service the names of but sixteen are known"; and the first name on the list is that of the inventor, Horace L. Huntley, who lost his life in his submarine. Yet successive crews volunteered for "this desperate service," and February 17, 1864, the *Huntley* sank U. S. S. *Housatonic* off Charleston, going to the bottom with its victim. Years afterward the submarine was found in the same place, and raised with the bodies of its captain and all its crew. The boat which made the attack on U. S. S. *New Ironsides* was of the "David" type.

These Confederate developments of the original American idea of the submarine undoubtedly paved the way for Holland,

<sup>1</sup> Special Order No. 271, Dec. 14, 1863.

<sup>2</sup> *Southern Historical Society Papers*, April, 1878.

Lake, and others, and led to the recent high efficiency of the U-boat, which has become so important a factor in the grand tactics of the present war.

As a dangerous commerce-destroyer nothing approaching the U-boats has ever been seen. The other commerce-destroyers, the light German cruisers, which early in the war made such destructive raids on British shipping, closely followed the tactics originated by the Confederate Navy in the Civil War. This was the first navy to make commerce-destroying a factor in war after the abolition of privateering.

In spite of the prohibition against privateers in the Declaration of Paris,<sup>1</sup> the Confederate Government at the outbreak of the Civil War hoped to create a fleet of privateers. This proved impossible. The South did not have the ships, and privateering was never of much importance in the war. The South then tried new tactics, and the Confederate Navy commissioned regular warships whose mission was commerce-destroying.

These cruisers, *Sumter*, *Alabama*, *Florida*, *Georgia*, etc., almost drove the United States flag from the seas. With the command of the sea hopelessly against them, their raids were carried on with the greatest ingenuity and daring, and it was very difficult to catch them.

In the present war the German cruisers imitated the tactics of these Confederate commerce-destroyers, and did a great amount of damage, with the same control of the sea against them. The *Alabama* and the *Emden* will always be associated in their kinship of successful audacity.

For the Federals on the sea the hardest task was the blockade of the Confederate coast. Blockades had been used before in warfare, and the status of a blockade was well defined.<sup>2</sup> But what the United States Navy accomplished was no "cabinet blockade," but an effective blockade such as had never been seen.

Here was one of the longest coast lines in the world, where harbors and inlets gave every advantage to the blockade runner. The United States Navy had not ships enough to carry out the task, but, with characteristic energy, all kinds of craft were utilized. The steamer *Circassian*, one of the most valu-

<sup>1</sup> "Privateering is and remains abolished." (Declaration of Paris, 1856.)

<sup>2</sup> "A blockade to be legal must be effective." (Declaration of Paris, 1856.)

able prizes of the war, was actually captured by a Fulton ferryboat. At first the blockade was *de facto*, as different portions of the coast were policed and notified of the blockade, but in an astonishingly short time the long coastline was effectively hemmed in. "As to the legal efficiency of the blockade after the first six months there can be no question."<sup>1</sup>

This was only the beginning of the undertaking. Great profits offered inducements to blockade runners. After the blockade became stringent and ships were being constantly seized on the high seas, attempts were made to evade capture by clearing for one of the available neutral ports, touching there, and then trying to run into a Confederate port.

Bermuda, Nassau, Havana, and Matamoras were these ports, of which Nassau was much the most active. The idea was that the claim of neutral destination would protect the ship for most of its voyage, and it would be in danger only in the short run between the neutral port and the Southern port.

This practice proved easy to stop, as the character of cargo and evidence of final destination brought condemnation in the courts. This evidence was most difficult in the case of Matamoras, the only town of importance on the Confederate southern border, but so general became the forfeiture of ships and cargoes that some other evasion was necessary.

The next scheme tried was clearance for the neutral ports, and then trans-shipment at the neutral port. The return cargoes were to be handled in the same way. "But here again the courts stepped in, and held that though a trans-shipment was made, even after landing the cargo and going through a form of sale, the two voyages were parts of one and the same transaction, and the cargo from the outset was liable to condemnation, if the original intention had been to forward the goods to a blockaded port. Nor did the decision stop here. As all property, both ship and cargo, is confiscated upon proof of breach of blockade, it was held that ships carrying on this traffic to neutral ports were confiscable, provided the ultimate destination of the cargo to a blockaded port was known to the owner. In the words of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, 'The ships are planks of the same bridge.'"<sup>2</sup>

The last resort of the blockade runners was most ingenious: to break the voyage by shipping to a Federal port, then to a

<sup>1</sup> Professor J. R. Soley, U.S.N.

<sup>2</sup> Soley.

neutral port, then to the Confederate port. Goods were shipped to New York by regular steamship lines, thence to Nassau, to be sent to the South. This was ended, when it was observed that trade with Nassau and Bermuda was abnormal, by orders issued to the collectors of customs to refuse clearance to vessels whose cargoes were in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy, and to require owners to give ample security where there was ground for apprehension that cargoes were destined for the enemy's use.

These orders were general and named no particular ports. Yet the "merchants of Nassau" complained of this "unjust discrimination" and persuaded Earl Russell to take up the subject diplomatically. The correspondence that followed showed so plainly that "the trade of the Bahamas" was blockade running, that the British Government "derived little satisfaction," and the traffic was ended.

Thus were overcome difficulties, physical and legal, that seemed insuperable. The amount of harm done to the South by these perfected blockading tactics cannot be estimated.

This well-established case of successful legal blockading tactics was at the command of the British Government at the outbreak of this war. Enforcement of a legal blockade against the Teutonic Allies would have been very difficult, but if the British had proclaimed such a blockade at the outset, they could have attempted to build up their case on the case already established. Such a policy at the start might not have caused undue friction among the neutral nations.

Instead of this, Great Britain attempted to keep goods from the Teutonic Allies by using her command of the sea, and by proclaiming an increasing list of contrabands, and "war areas" in the North Sea. It is now recognized that this method was a mistake, especially the "war area" policy, which gave Germany the chance to play the same game, and Great Britain later imitated our Civil War blockade.

The American invention and development of the airplane is so recent that there is no need to describe it.

It is impressive to sum up these American contributions to the tactics of the World War.

On land:

The mobile army kept in the field, and the end of formal battles.



The superiority of intrenchments, and the end of formal fortresses.

The development of "hasty intrenchments," and of armies manoeuvring and intrenching.

The development of the airplane.

On the sea :

The development of the "all-big-gun ship."

The tactical superiority of the armored ship.

The tactical superiority of guns mounted in turrets — and of turrets aligned over the keel.

The tactical use of the torpedo.

The tactical use of the submarine.

Raids on an enemy's coast by a weaker fleet.

The development of a legal blockade of a long coast line.

Commerce-destroying as a factor in war.

The development of the hydroplane.

The facts and results given in this paper are not exaggerated. In truth they are understated. No attempt has been made to give a list of American inventions that have been used in warfare — the purpose has been only to show to what extent America has influenced the grand tactics of the war. This should not make us self-satisfied with our past — on the contrary, it ought to be a stimulus in our present great task.

Throughout the rest of the war the use of hasty intrenchments remained the basis of the tactics of armies in the field. For a time, on the Western Front, trench warfare had become conventionalized. The scant results obtained in the various offensives of the Allies caused an opinion to prevail that opportunities for manoeuvre of intrenched armies had become restricted. The Allies had possessed a numerical superiority in the last part of 1916 and in 1917; but their attacks had not succeeded in dislocating the German armies, and they had perforce adopted the so-called tactics of "limited objectives."

The new tactics devised by the Germans, and used in the great offensives of 1918, were a return to the principle of surprise concentrations against chosen points of attack, and again in the West it became a war of movement fought by armies manoeuvring and intrenching.

Although these battles of 1918 were described as being

"in the open," in contrast to the "stabilized" warfare of 1916 and 1917 on the Western Front, the various actions were in no sense a return to the old European tactics, which were in vogue before the use of hasty intrenchments was developed in America. In fact these battles all consisted of attack and defense with the use of hasty intrenchments. These shelters were still necessary for successful attack or defense, but the flexibility of such aids to manoeuvre had been regained, and the last critical battles in the Meuse-Argonne were like the fighting in the Wilderness in the Civil War.

It must not be inferred that these tactics, which were called by Colonel Wagner "a contribution from America to the war knowledge of the world", were in any sense irregular, although they originated in our departures from the old formal tactics of European battles. On the contrary, they had been adopted by all armies and had become an essential of warfare. But conditions on the Western Front, as described in the text of this book, had brought into being false doctrines as to the limitations of so-called "stabilized" warfare. These ideas were prevalent among the Allies,<sup>1</sup> and they had also spread to the United States. These doctrines were opposed by officers of our Regular Army, who stood out strongly for a return to our own methods, and the efforts of these officers were justified by results on the battlefield.

It is a matter for solemn thanksgiving that the United States provided the military strength necessary to change defeat into victory, but the means by which this was accomplished meant another epoch-making change in military methods on the part of America. From the point of view of the European military expert it was impossible for the United States to produce armies strong enough to influence the campaigns of 1918. This was the calculation of the German General Staff, which did not admit the possibility of a successful military effort on the part of the United States.

Yet the United States sent to Europe 2,080,000 soldiers,

<sup>1</sup> "The principles accepted or evolved by us had been gradually absorbed, or rediscovered, in Europe, and were commonplace to all armies when the war began. Relative values became distorted on the stabilized fronts, and the doctrine became obscured in Europe." Lt. Col. Oliver L. Spaulding, Jr., U. S. A.

who were so efficient that 1,390,000 were actually used in the fighting. The accomplishment of this impossibility was really the experience of our Civil War repeated. The excellence of the armies of the North and of the South in the Civil War had never been appreciated, because the superior intelligence and adaptability of their personnel was not understood. No European nation had such material for an army, and European military critics had assumed that these extemporized armies would have failed in European conditions. This was not the opinion of students of The Civil War, but there had been no opportunity for comparison. In The World War of 1914-1918 Americans were again aroused to a great effort, and again the effort resulted in producing armies in an incredibly short time.

These men of a few months' training were reluctantly used in the battle line by the Allied Command, and only in the desperate crisis of defeat. But they stood every test of battle, and the American Army bore the brunt of the Allied offensive in the hard-fought Meuse-Argonne battle, which was the decisive action. This proved true the contention of students of the Civil War that American methods had not only revolutionized tactics but also the making of armies.

## A REVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND<sup>1</sup>

As explained in the text, the Battle of Jutland was the only great action of fleets. The vast scale of the development of land warfare has been reflected in the accounts of many operations. The corresponding development of war on the sea can only be shown by a narrative of this naval action and its varied events. There is another reason for giving details of this engagement. From the time of the action to the present, the Battle of Jutland has been made a matter of controversy that has enshrouded it in a cloud of fable murkier than even the smoke and mist of the fateful afternoon on the North Sea. Accounts have been so molded to fit partisan theories that the actual events are very little known.

The reader may safely rely upon the following review, which has followed the officially established facts, and has not been influenced by controversies. It will give a basis for knowledge of the action that will enable anyone to read varying narratives without losing the thread. The use of the chart at Page 326 will be found of value in tracing the course of the action. It has been ably prepared by Allan Westcott of the United States Naval Academy, and its unusually clear indications show vividly the situations of the battle.

Sufficient time has now passed since the Battle of Jutland (May 31, 1916) to eliminate the early distorted versions of the action and to give a proper perspective of the tactics of the opposing fleets. To understand the battle, it is necessary to realize that it had become the custom of the British fleet to leave its safeguarded bases in the north of the British Isles and make periodical sweeps through the North Sea. At the beginning of his Report of the battle Admiral Jellicoe describes this practice:

"The Ships of the Grand Fleet, in pursuance of the general policy of periodical sweeps through the North Sea, had left its base on the previous day in accordance with instructions issued by me. In the early afternoon of Wednesday, May 31, the 1st and 2nd Battle Cruiser Squadrons, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons,

<sup>1</sup> By courtesy of *Current History Magazine*.



and destroyers from the 1st, 9th, and 13th Flotillas, supported by the Fifth Battle Squadron, were, in accordance with my directions, scouting to the southward of the Battle Fleet."

On May 31 the German High Seas Fleet was also on the North Sea. There had been an insistent demand from the German people for activity on the part of the battle fleet. In response the new commander, Admiral Scheer, had taken his battleships to sea at times. These changed tactics were a demonstration for effect in Germany, but Admiral Scheer had improved the efficiency of his command, and he had with him all the strength he could muster, even including the available pre-dreadnoughts. He was thus prepared to fight, if he engaged the British fleet in part or under conditions advantageous for the Germans. This sortie of May 31 brought on the Battle of Jutland. For some time after the action there were tales of other objectives, — to cover the escape of raiders, to get ships out of the Baltic, etc. But all these theories have been abandoned.<sup>1</sup> The opposing forces in the battle of Jutland were as follows:

1. An advance British force under Vice Admiral Beatty, consisting of six battle cruisers (four Lions of 28 knots speed, each carrying eight 13.5-inch guns, and two Indefatigables of 25 knots speed, each carrying eight 12-inch guns), supported by the Fifth Battle Squadron, under Rear Admiral Evan-Thomas (four 25-knot battleships of the Queen Elizabeth class, each carrying eight 15-inch guns).<sup>2</sup>

The fleet speed of this advance force was 25 knots.

2. The main body of the British Grand Fleet, under Admiral Jellicoe, flying his flag in the *Iron Duke*, consisting of a fast wing under Rear Admiral Hood (three 26-knot battle cruisers of Invincible class, each carrying eight 12-inch guns), a division of four armored cruisers under Rear Admiral Arbuthnot, and twenty-four dreadnoughts in three squadrons commanded by Vice Admirals Burney, Jerram and Sturdee.

<sup>1</sup> This question has been ended by Admiral Scheer's account of his definite order of May 18, 1916, for a raid on the east coast of England at Sunderland, including the dispositions of U-boats, which "would be certain to call out a display of English fighting forces. . . ." "Germany's High Seas Fleet in the World War", Admiral Scheer.

<sup>2</sup> *Barham* (F.), *Valiant*, *Malaya*, *Warspite*.

The fleet speed of this main body was 20 knots, and its formidable armament will be found in the table on Page 309.

3. Twenty-five light cruisers, and seventy-eight destroyers, divided between the advance force and the main body.<sup>1</sup>

The German strength comprised:

1. An advance force under Vice Admiral Hipper, consisting of five battle cruisers (three Derfflingers of 28 knots speed, each carrying eight 12-inch guns, and two Moltkes of 27 knots speed, each carrying ten 11-inch guns).

The fleet speed of this advance force was 27 knots.

2. The main body of the German High Seas Fleet, under Admiral Scheer, consisting of sixteen dreadnoughts<sup>2</sup> and six pre-dreadnought battleships.

The fleet speed of this main body was 17 knots, because the German dreadnoughts had been ckd out with pre-dreadnought battleships of less speed. Four dreadnoughts carried twelve 11-inch guns each, four twelve 12-inch guns each, the rest ten 12-inch guns each. The six old German battleships were very inferior, carrying only four heavy guns each.

3. Eleven light cruisers and eighty-eight destroyers,<sup>3</sup> divided between the advance force and the main body.

The above-described make-up of the opposing fleets must be kept in mind, when studying the course of the action. The day of the battle was cloudy, but the sun shone through the clouds most of the time. At no time was there anything approaching a sea. Visibility was reported as good in the first stages of the action, but later in the afternoon, there being little wind, mist and smoke hung heavy over the surface of the sea. These conditions must also be remembered, as the increasing mist had a great influence on the course of the action.

First of all, it should be said that any criticism of Admiral Jellicoe as to the make-up of the British advance force is not justified. The Queen Elizabeth class of dreadnoughts had been designed with the great speed of 25 knots for the purpose of working with battle cruisers on such service.

<sup>1</sup> "47 with the Battle Fleet, 31 with Battle Cruisers." Lord Jellicoe.

<sup>2</sup> König Albert absent. Admiral Scheer.

<sup>3</sup> Admiral Jellicoe.

This gave them a speed that was uniform with the fleet speed of Vice Admiral Beatty's battle cruiser squadrons, although the individual ships of the Lion class were faster. The nameship of this battleship class, the *Queen Elizabeth*, had been through a long, racking service in the Dardanelles operations, and was not with the fleet. The other four ships of the class made up the Fifth Battle Squadron under Rear Admiral Evan-Thomas, which was under Vice Admiral Beatty's command.

This disposition of Admiral Jellicoe's fleet, with the advance force flung out ahead, seems sound from every tactical point of view, with the assumption that the advance was to be in touch with the main fleet, or, if out of touch, tactical possibilities had been provided for and plans of action prearranged.

In the sweep through the North Sea, with the main body of the British Grand Fleet some fifty miles astern, Vice Admiral Beatty's advance force was cruising to southward of Admiral Jellicoe May 31, 1916, when, at 2.20 P.M., the presence of enemy ships was reported by a light cruiser. Admiral Beatty altered course "to the eastward and subsequently to northeastward, the enemy being sighted at 3.31 P.M. Their force consisted of five battle cruisers."<sup>1</sup>

It is stated in Vice Admiral Beatty's report that it was over an hour after the first news of the vicinity of enemy ships before he increased speed to 25 knots to engage ("at 3.30 P.M." <sup>2</sup>). Yet Vice Admiral Beatty reports that Rear Admiral Evan-Thomas's Fifth Battle Squadron (the four *Queen Elizabeths*) was still 10,000 yards away when he made this move to engage the enemy with his battle cruisers. This forces us to the conclusion that Admiral Beatty thought his six battle cruisers would be able to take care of the situation. His confidence is explained by the fact that all previous sorties of the Germans had been made by battle cruisers or small craft.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Report of Vice Admiral Beatty.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "At this time I was confident that under the determined leadership of Sir David Beatty, with a force of four of our best and fastest battleships and six battle cruisers, very serious injury would be inflicted on the five battle cruisers of the enemy, if they could be kept within range." Admiral Jellicoe. "The Grand Fleet 1914-1916."

Both sides threw out screens of light cruisers, which clashed, and at 3.48 "the action commenced at a range of 18,500 yards, both sides opening fire practically simultaneously."<sup>1</sup> The British battle cruisers fought on a course curving to the southeast, and then on a straight south-southeast course, and the five German battle cruisers fought them on a parallel course, instead of edging away from the superior British force. It is now easy to see that the trend of the action was absolutely in the direction of the approaching main body of the German High Seas Fleet, but this, very naturally, was not apparent at the time to Admiral Beatty.

The first phase of the battle may properly be studied as a fight between the British and German battle cruisers, in consequence of the before-stated gap separating the two parts of Admiral Beatty's command. This interval of 10,000 yards prevented the Fifth Battle Squadron of *Queen Elizabeth* dreadnoughts from being a factor at the time. Vice Admiral Beatty reports that this squadron "opened fire at a range of 20,000 yards," and he continues: "The Fifth Battle Squadron was engaging the enemy's rear ships, unfortunately at very long range."

In this part of the action came the first of the many upsets of pre-war calculations. Comparing the given strength of the two opposing squadrons in action, it will be seen that the British battle cruisers were greatly superior; in fact, the odds would have been considered prohibitive before this battle. Yet it was the British squadron that suffered, losing one third of its ships. At about 4.6 P.M. the *Indefatigable* was sunk, and at about 4.26 P.M. the *Queen Mary* met the same fate. In each case there was a great explosion up through the turrets, suggesting that a weak turret construction is really a conductor of fire to the magazine in case of a heavy hit, and pointing to the need of better separation of the supply of ammunition from the magazine.

At 4.15 there was an attack "simultaneously" <sup>2</sup> by British and German destroyers which resulted in a lively fight, but no damage to any of the capital ships. Yet the possibilities of such torpedo attacks were so evident, here and later in the battle, that the destroyer at once attained a

<sup>1</sup> Report of Vice Admiral Beatty.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



greater value as an auxiliary of the battleship. It should also be noted that German submarines were reported present at this stage, but they accomplished nothing against the screened fighting ships.<sup>1</sup> A British airplane had been sent up from a mother ship just before the engagement, though Admiral Beatty reports that it was forced to fly low on account of the clouds, and had a hard task "to identify four enemy light cruisers." There was apparently no chance of a wide observation that would have warned Admiral Beatty of the approaching German High Seas Fleet. In this short hour were concentrated many new problems of naval warfare.

The advancing German High Seas Fleet was reported at 4.38 by a light cruiser, and sighted at 4.42 by the British battle cruisers. A few minutes later Vice Admiral Beatty's ships turned right about (180 degrees) in succession. The German battle cruisers also turned to a northwesterly course, closely followed up by the van of the German High Seas Fleet, and the action was continued on this course.

The report of Admiral Beatty and his conduct in this part of the action show that he had not suspected the presence of the German High Seas Fleet, and the British advance force was undoubtedly in a serious situation at the time of Admiral Beatty's turn in succession. But Admiral Hipper did not try for a capping position, and the British battle cruisers met no disaster at the turn.

One great advantage was gained for the British in this manoeuvre. By the turn in succession the four Queen Elizabeth battleships were brought into position to fight a rearguard action against the greatly strengthened force of the enemy. The leading German battleships, which were of the König class, fell into line, closely following Admiral Hipper's battle cruisers, and the battle was continued at 14,000 yards on a northwest course.

On the British side, at this stage, support was given by Admiral Evan-Thomas's Fifth Battle Squadron, which from this time took over the brunt of the action from Admiral Beatty's battle cruisers. The German battle cruisers could not stand up with the same effectiveness against the heavy

<sup>1</sup> "With regard to the submarines he was totally mistaken, as none took part in the battle." "Germany's High Seas Fleet in the World War", Admiral Scheer.

THE BRITISH GRAND FLEET AT THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND  
MAKE-UP AND ARMAMENT OF THE BATTLE FLEET LINE OF ADVANCE

1 Div.	2 Div.	3 Div.	4 Div.	5 Div.	6 Div.
(2) King George V (F) (10-13.5 inch)	(3) Orion (F) (10-13.5 inch)	(1) Iron Duke (FF) (10-13.5 inch)	(5) Benbow (F) (10-13.5 inch)	(6) Colossus (12-12 inch)	(7) Marlborough (F) (10-13.5 inch)
Ajax (10-13.5 inch)	Monarch (10-13.5 inch)	Royal Oak (8-15 inch)	Bellerophon (10-12 inch)	Collingwood (10-12 inch)	Revenge (8-15 inch)
Centurion (10-13.5 inch)	Conqueror (10-13.5 inch)	Superb (F) (10-12 inch)	Tenacious (10-12 inch)	Neptune (10-12 inch)	Hercules (10-12 inch)
Erin (10-13.5 inch)	Thunderer (10-13.5 inch)	Canada (10-14 inch)	Vanguard (10-12 inch)	St. Vincent (10-12 inch)	Agincourt (14-12 inch)

(1) Fleet Flagship — Flag of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe (Commander-in-Chief).

(2) Flagship of Vice-Admiral Sir W. Jerram, Commanding 2nd Battle Squadron.

(3) Flagship of Rear-Admiral A. C. Leveson, Rear Admiral in 2nd Battle Squadron.

(4) Flagship of Rear-Admiral A. L. Duff, Rear Admiral in 4th Battle Squadron.

(5) Flagship of Vice-Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, Commanding 4th Battle Squadron.

(6) Flagship of Rear-Admiral E. F. A. Gaunt, Rear-Admiral in 1st Battle Squadron.

(7) Flagship of Vice-Admiral Sir Cecil Burney, Commanding 1st Battle Squadron and second in command of the Grand Fleet.

guns of the Fifth Battle Squadron, and this, with an increase to full speed, enabled Admiral Beatty to draw ahead. He again opened up a gap between his battle cruisers and the Fifth Battle Squadron, taking a course that curved to the north and northeast, in search of Admiral Jellicoe's battle fleet, which was hastening to his assistance. The leading ships of the Grand Fleet were sighted at 5.56, and Admiral Beatty altered his course to the east at extreme speed. The German van also turned to eastward.

In the meantime, from the north, the British Grand Fleet had been closing at utmost fleet speed on south and southeast by south courses, disposed in six divisions, numbered from port to starboard, on parallel courses as shown by the diagram. Admiral Jellicoe had received no certain information from Vice Admiral Beatty as to the positions of the engaged ships, and he had been proceeding in the general direction of the running fight, instead of having in mind any definite point for joining forces with Vice Admiral Beatty. It must also be realized that conditions of increasing mist and intermittent fog, which rendered observation very uncertain, had become prevalent.

In the second phase of the action which has just been described,<sup>1</sup> there were clashes of light cruisers and isolated torpedo attacks, none of which had any tactical effect on the battle.

After this running fight in pursuit of Admiral Beatty's advance force, the German fleet was approaching the British Grand Fleet, which drew near in the increasing mist. To understand the course of the action at this critical stage, the reader should realize that the Germans possessed a fleet manoeuvre which had been carefully rehearsed for such a contingency, in sudden contact with a superior enemy force. This was a simultaneous swing-around of all the ships of the fleet, to turn the line and bring it into an opposite course. This manoeuvre the Germans successfully executed,<sup>2</sup> turning simultaneously to starboard, and throw-

<sup>1</sup> "The Battle Cruisers steamed some 6½ miles between 3.48 P.M., the time of opening fire, and 6.17 P.M., the time that the Battle Fleet commenced action." Admiral Jellicoe. "The Grand Fleet 1914-1916."

<sup>2</sup> At 6.35 P.M. "the swing-around was carried out in excellent style. At our peace manoeuvres great importance was always attached to their

ing out dense smoke screens to mask their ships (6.35 P.M.). With the Germans thus prepared in advance for the existing situation, it is hard to see how an overpowering force could have closed the Germans at this time, no matter what line of conduct was pursued by Lord Jellicoe.

It is also evident that the ships of the German van had not been damaged by the Fifth British Battle Squadron to the extent of demoralizing the German gunfire. The immediate damage inflicted on the advance of the British Grand Fleet is proof enough of this. Well ahead of the Grand Fleet was the Third Battle Cruiser Squadron (3 ships) under Rear Admiral Hood. This Squadron was signaled by Vice Admiral Beatty "to form single line ahead and take station"<sup>1</sup> ahead of Admiral Beatty's four remaining battle cruisers, which were turned to a southeast and southerly course across the van of the German fleet. In obedience to this signal, Rear Admiral Hood turned to take station ahead (6.21), closing to a range of 8000 yards (6.25). "At about 6.34"<sup>1</sup> his flagship, the *Invincible*, was sunk by gunfire.

Almost at the same time three of Rear Admiral Arbuthnot's armored cruisers, *Black Prince*, *Warrior*, and *Defense*, "not aware of the approach of the enemy's heavy ships,"<sup>1</sup> were put out of action. (*Defense* was sunk; *Warrior* sank while attempt was being made to tow her home; *Black Prince* was sunk later, probably by gunfire.)

At this stage, the British Grand Fleet formed line of battle, deploying on the port wing column,<sup>2</sup> and engaged the enemy on courses turning from southeast to southwest and west, as the German fleet turned and was soon to westward. The Fifth Battle Squadron, as explained, had been separated by a long interval from the rest of Vice Admiral Beatty's force, and it had taken position astern of Admiral Jellicoe's main fleet. In this manoeuvre the *Warspite* had jammed her helm and was out of control for a while. She

being carried out on a curved line and every means employed to insure the working of the signals. The trouble spent was now well repaid. . . ." "Germany's High Seas Fleet in the World War", Admiral Scheer.

<sup>1</sup> Report of Admiral Jellicoe.

<sup>2</sup> "At about 6.38 P.M., the 6th Division was in line and our deployment was complete." Admiral Jellicoe. "The Grand Fleet 1914-1916."



was a good deal damaged, but was extricated from her predicament and taken back to the British base.

The battle cruiser *Lutzow*, the flagship of the German advance force, had become totally disabled, and Vice Admiral Hipper had transhipped his flag to another battle cruiser.

At this time intermittent fog and mist hung over the water, to a degree that was unusual even for the North Sea. The Germans took advantage of these conditions, also using smoke screens, to fight an evasive battle with the superior force now in line against them. The German ships would appear and disappear in the smoke and mist with constant threats of torpedo attacks.

The German fleet, by its swing-around at 6.35 P.M., as described, had changed to an opposite course and disappeared behind its dense screen of smoke. After the successful use of this turn under battle conditions had freed the Germans from the pressure of their enemy, Admiral Scheer repeated the same manoeuvre at 6.55 P.M., turning again to starboard on an easterly course toward the British fleet, with a strong torpedo attack by his flotillas in advance of his fleet. After holding this course for only about twenty minutes, the German Admiral, at 7.17 P.M., for the third time made the same swing-around to starboard "to a westerly course", and again disappeared in the mist and smoke.

The attack by the torpedo flotillas, after the second turn toward the British fleet, had been so threatening that shortly after seven the British battleships were turned away to port to avoid it, but for the most part the British fleet was trying to close with its elusive enemy.

Admiral Jellicoe reports of this stage of the action :

"Owing principally to the mist, but partly to the smoke, it was possible to see only a few ships at a time in the enemy's battle line. Toward the van only some four or five ships were ever visible at once. More could be seen from the rear squadron, but never more than eight to twelve. The action between the battle fleets lasted intermittently from 6.17 P.M. to 8.20 P.M. at ranges between 9000 yards and 12,000 yards. During this time the British fleet made alterations of course from southeast by east to west (168½ degrees) in the endeavor to close, but the enemy constantly turned

away and opened the range under cover of destroyer attacks and smoke screens. The alterations of course had the effect of bringing the British Fleet (which commenced the action in a position of advantage on the bow of the enemy) to a quarterly bearing from the enemy's battle line, but at the same time placed us between the enemy and his bases."

As the darkness came on, it is evident that these tactics on the part of the Germans, with increasing threats of torpedo attacks, became more and more baffling to the British Command, and then came the crucial decision which ended the battle. Admiral Jellicoe reports :

"At 9 P.M. the enemy was entirely out of sight, and the threat of torpedo boat destroyer attacks during the rapidly approaching darkness made it necessary for me to dispose of the fleet for the night, with a view to its safety from such attacks, while providing for a renewal of action at daylight. I accordingly manoeuvred to remain between the enemy and his bases, placing our flotillas in a position in which they would afford protection to the fleet from destroyer attack and at the same time be favorably situated for attacking the enemy's heavy ships."

Concerning this stage of the action Admiral Jellicoe in his Report quotes Vice Admiral Beatty as follows :

"In view of the gathering darkness and the fact that our strategical position was such as to make it appear certain that we should locate the enemy at daylight under most favorable circumstances, I did not consider it desirable or proper to close the enemy battle fleet during the dark hours."

Here the British Admiral and his subordinate were in accord, but of course the responsibility for the movements of the British fleet rested with Admiral Jellicoe, as Commander-in-Chief. By his order the British fleet steamed through the dark hours on southerly courses "some eighty-five miles" from the battlefield.<sup>1</sup> Although the British fleet was thus placed in the general direction of Heligoland, this meant that Admiral Jellicoe relinquished all touch with the German fleet, and this left the German fleet practically free to proceed to its bases, which was done without any interference, bringing in their damaged ships. The Germans even attempted to tow the wreck of the *Lutzow* into port, but she sank on the way in.

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Jellicoe.

This move to the southward by the British Fleet ended the Battle of Jutland. In the night there were isolated clashes of small fry, the adventures of lame ducks, etc., but there was nothing that affected the tactical results, and nothing that was in any sense a battle of fleets.

At the early coming of light in these latitudes ("at about 2.47 A.M." June 1)<sup>1</sup> the British fleet was to the southward and westward of the Horn Reef, about eighty-five miles from the battlefield. The British fleet then retraced its course to the battlefield. This return of the British fleet, by the same lane it followed in the night, did not regain touch with the German fleet. Admiral Jellicoe reports that he remained in the vicinity of the battlefield until 11 A.M. when he was "reluctantly compelled to the conclusion that the High Seas Fleet had returned into port." Soon afterward the British fleet proceeded to its bases.

In the early accounts of the battle there were fanciful tales of pursuit of the German ships through the night, and even after Admiral Jellicoe's Report the British public did not at first realize the situation at the end of the action. But after a time, when this was better understood, there arose one of the greatest naval controversies that have ever agitated Great Britain, centered around the alleged "defensive" naval policy for maintaining the supremacy of Great Britain on the seas, — the pros and cons as to closing the Germans while there was light, and keeping in touch through the dark hours. With that discussion this article has nothing to do, but the tactical situation at the end of the battle should be stated.

At 9 o'clock the German fleet was to the westward. The British fleet was between it and all its bases. The British fleet was superior in speed, and had such an overwhelming superiority in ships and guns that it could afford to discard its damaged ships without impairing this superiority. The British Admiral had light cruisers and destroyers, to throw out a screen and to maintain touch with the German fleet. There undoubtedly was a proportion of damaged ships in the German fleet; and this, with its original inferior fleet speed, would have made it a hard task for the German fleet to ease around the British fleet and reach its bases.

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Jellicoe.

These conditions were in favor of keeping in touch with the German fleet.

On the other hand, for Admiral Jellicoe to have kept his fleet in touch with the German fleet through the dark hours, even by the most efficient use of his screen of destroyers and cruisers, would have meant taking the risk of a night action, which might have involved his capital ships. Above all things there was the ominous threat of torpedo attacks in the night, with possibilities of disaster to the fleet upon which depended the established British control of the seas.

These were the conditions of the problem that confronted the British Admiral, brought about by the culminating tactics of the battle. Admiral Jellicoe's decision was that the situation did not justify him in imperiling his fleet and with it the naval supremacy of Great Britain.

In this greatest of all naval actions it is interesting to study the course of the battle in comparison with pre-war calculations. The outstanding feature, the collapse of the three British battle cruisers, was not entirely unexpected by naval opinion. The battle cruiser had found a great vogue especially in England, but before this battle a reaction had already set in, aided by the fact that the *Lion* had been put out by weaker gunfire in the Dogger Bank chase. Many naval men had come to believe that the battle cruiser was only a cruiser after all — though a valuable cruiser — and not up to taking a place in a real line of battle.

The battleships stood up well, and everything in the battle confirmed the judgment of those who had pinned their faith to the battleships as the essential of naval power.

The two most revolutionary elements in naval warfare were present, but they cannot be said to have exerted any tactical effect on the battle. The limited use of the airplane has been told, and a Zeppelin was reported at about 4 A.M. June 1, which may have observed the location of the British fleet. U-boats were reported early in the action, but there is no hint that they took any part in the battle. Yet this does not mean that they are not to be considered. With the great improvements in the type, it is probable that in many conditions the U-boat will be a factor in battles of fleets, and such contingencies should be safeguarded in advance.



The destroyer came to its own in the Battle of Jutland as an auxiliary of the battle fleet, both for offense and defense. The whole course of the action proved that a screen of destroyers was absolutely necessary. For offense, it might be argued truthfully that, of the great number of torpedoes used, very few hit anything. The *Marlborough* was the only capital ship reported struck in the real action, and she was able afterward to take some part in the battle, and then get back to her base. But above all things stands out the fact that it was the threat of night torpedo attacks by destroyers which made the British fleet withdraw from the battlefield.

There is no question of the fact that this withdrawal of the British fleet had a great moral effect on Germany. The announcement to the people and to the Reichstag had a heartening effect on the Germans at just the time they needed some such stimulant. But the actual tactical result of the battle was indecisive. It may be said the Germans had so manoeuvred their fleet that a detached part of the superior British force was cut up, but the damage was not enough to impair the established superiority of the British fleet, and the end of the battle left the British control of the sea absolutely unchanged.

The following is the British statement of losses :<sup>1</sup>

#### BATTLE CRUISERS

	TONNAGE	ARMOR BELT	MAIN BATTERY	SPEED	MEN	C'D
Queen Mary . . . .	27,000	9 in.	8 13.5-in.	28	1,000	'13
Indefatigable . . . .	18,750	8 in.	8 12-in.	26	899	'11
Invincible . . . . .	17,250	7 in.	8 12-in.	26	750	'08

#### ARMORED CRUISERS

	TONNAGE	ARMOR BELT	MAIN BATTERY	SPEED	MEN	C'D
Defense . . . . .	14,600	6 in.	4 9.2-in.	23	755	'08
Black Prince . . . .	13,550	6 in.	6 9.2-in.	20.5	704	'06
Warrior . . . . .	13,550	6 in.	6 9.2-in.	22.9	704	'08

<sup>1</sup> "Naval Power in the War." Commander Charles C. Gill, U.S.N.

#### DESTROYERS

	TONNAGE	ARMAMENT	SPEED	DATE COMPLETION
Tipperary . . . . .	1,900	—	—	31 160 '14
Turbulent . . . . .	—	—	—	—
Fortune . . . . .	920	—	—	29.50 100 '12
Sparrow Hawk . . . .	950	—	3 4-in.	31.32 100 '12
Ardent . . . . .	950	—	3 4-in.	31.32 100 '12
Nomad . . . . .	—	—	—	—
Nestor . . . . .	—	—	—	—
Shark . . . . .	950	—	3 4-in.	31.32 100 '12

The German losses reported by the German Admiralty are :<sup>1</sup>

#### BATTLESHIP

	TONNAGE	ARMAMENT	SPEED	DATE COMPLETION
Pommern . . . . .	13,040	4 11-in. 14 6.7-in.	19	1907

#### BATTLE CRUISER

Lützow . . . . .	28,000	8 12-in. 12 6-in.	27	1915
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#### LIGHT CRUISERS

Rostock . . . . .	4,820	12 4.1-in.	27.3	1914
Frauenlob . . . . .	2,656	10 4.1-in.	21.5	1903

#### NEW LIGHT CRUISERS

Elbing . . . . .	—	—	—	—
Wiesbaden . . . . .	—	—	—	—

#### DESTROYERS

Five . . . . .	—	—	—	—
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#### TOTAL TONNAGE LOST

British . . . . .	117,150
German . . . . .	60,720

#### TOTAL PERSONNEL LOST

British . . . . .	6,105
German . . . . .	2,414

<sup>1</sup> "Naval Power in the War." Commander Charles C. Gill, U.S.N.

The preceding review has been confirmed by Lord Jellicoe's book, "The Grand Fleet 1914-1916." The British Commander-in-Chief's own story has given a definite basis for consideration of the action. The following excerpts and comments are given, not merely in reference to the battle, but with the object of suggesting to the reader's mind the complicated problems of modern naval warfare.

Land battles have outgrown all former ideas. In the same way, naval warfare has changed, and the reader must not think in the old terms of small factors, but realize that the deployed Grand Fleet would extend some eight miles.

Admiral Jellicoe's book is an intimate account of the creation, maintenance and tactical employment of the Grand Fleet. In fact, it is practically a log. The reader at once is made to realize the initial difficulties of the task of the Commander-in-Chief of the first great battle fleet that was compelled to encounter the many new difficulties of naval warfare. At the outset Admiral Jellicoe sums up as follows:

"But, more than all, it was the conditions under which war broke out that made it necessary for us in the Grand Fleet to build what was almost a new organization.

"(a) The submarine had just become a most formidable weapon; its development during the war was extraordinarily rapid.

"(b) The airship as a scout was in its infancy at the start, but it also developed with great rapidity, as did the heavier-than-air machines.

"(c) The mine, neglected by us, had been highly developed by the enemy, both defensively and offensively.

"(d) The effective range both of the gun and of the torpedo was quickly shown to be much greater than had been considered possible before the war.

"(e) Wireless telegraphy developed with great rapidity and was put to many uses not dreamt of in pre-war days."

Keeping these difficulties in mind and reading that bases had to be shifted and ships constantly manoeuvred to avoid mines and torpedoes, with patrols to be continued and the blockade to be maintained, it is easy to understand that the so-called "defensive" school of naval warfare came into being, especially in view of the far-reaching results

that had been attained by the one established condition, the superiority of the British fleet over that of the enemy. It was natural enough that it should seem more important than anything else to preserve the existing naval supremacy of the Allies.

With this opinion prevalent among many British naval authorities, it is interesting to study the trend of mind of the Commander-in-Chief before the Battle of Jutland.

Admiral Jellicoe very ably and clearly states his convictions: "What were the strategical conditions? To what extent was it justifiable to take risks with the Grand Fleet, particularly risks the full consequence of which could not be foreseen owing to the new conditions of naval warfare?"

"The Grand Fleet included almost the whole of our available capital ships. There was very little in reserve behind it. . . ."

Admiral Jellicoe then gives figures comparing the strength of the opposing fleets in 1805 with the strength in 1916, and he continues:

"A consideration of these figures will show that the situation at the two periods under review was very different, in that, in 1805, the force engaged at Trafalgar was only a relatively small portion of the available British fleet, whilst in 1916 the Grand Fleet included the large majority of the vessels upon which the country had to rely for safety."

"Earlier in the war, at the end of October, 1914, I had written to the Admiralty pointing out the dangers which an intelligent use of submarines, mines and torpedoes by the Germans, before and during a fleet action, would involve to the Grand Fleet, and had stated the tactics which I had intended in order to bring the enemy to action in the shortest practicable time and with the best chance of achieving such a victory as would be decisive. I stated that with new and untried methods of warfare, new tactics must be devised to meet them."

"I received in reply an expression of approval of my views and of confidence in the manner in which I proposed to handle the fleet in action."

"Neither in October, 1914, nor in May, 1916, did the margin of superiority of the Grand Fleet over the High Seas



Fleet justify me in disregarding the enemy's torpedo fire or meeting it otherwise than by definite movements deduced after most careful analysis of the problem at sea with the fleet and on the tactical board."

"The severely restricted forces behind the Grand Fleet were taken into account in making the decision. There was also a possibility that the Grand Fleet might later be called upon to confront a situation of much wider scope than that already existing."

In addition to these strategic considerations, Admiral Jellicoe states many advantages in construction and equipment possessed by the German fleet, which offset the great superiority of the British Grand Fleet. He dwells upon the greater armor protection of the German ships, and upon their heavier torpedo armament, with other elements of better construction and equipment.

In explaining these advantages possessed by the weaker German fleet Admiral Jellicoe also reveals disappointing conditions in backwardness of methods on the part of the British Navy. There was not alone the lack of modern methods in range-finding and director fire-control, but also in torpedo attack and defense, and in preparation for night actions. It is something of a shock to read that the stronger British fleet went into the Jutland battle with a handicap in these essentials that became a factor to prevent a decisive action.

He also emphasizes the greater number of torpedoes carried by the German destroyers and the consequent ability of the German fleet to make torpedo attacks stronger than its proportionate force in comparison with the British fleet. Lord Jellicoe states that this possible strength of torpedo attacks on the part of the Germans had been recognized as an adverse factor. "The probable tactics of the German fleet had been a matter of almost daily consideration, and all our experience and thought led to the same conclusion, namely, that retiring tactics, combined with destroyer attacks, would be adopted by them."

Admiral Jellicoe's statement of the advantages possessed by a retiring fleet is in itself an interesting comment on the tactics of the action.

"(a) The retiring fleet places itself in a position of advantage in regard to torpedo attack on the following fleet.

The retiring fleet also eliminates, to a large extent, danger of torpedo attacks by the following fleet."

"(b) Opportunity is afforded the retiring fleet of drawing its opponent over a mine or submarine trap."

"(c) Smoke screens can be used with effect to interfere with the observation of gunfire by the following fleet."

"(d) Consideration of moral effect will force the stronger fleet to follow the weaker, and play into the hands of the enemy."

"The reasons which make it necessary to be more cautious when dealing with the attack of under-water weapons than with gun attack are the greater damage which one torpedo hit will cause, which damage may well be fatal to many ships, in most cases compelling the ships to reduce speed and leave the line of battle."

These carefully thought-out conclusions guided Admiral Jellicoe in his conduct of the action. His story confirms the version given in this review, that the Germans took every advantage of the mist and smoke; and, that they were always able to fight an evasive battle, concealing themselves and making frequent threats of torpedo attacks. They had also proved their ability to sheer off, and, whatever deployment Lord Jellicoe might have adopted, he would have been compelled to grope for the elusive German ships in mist and smoke. The idea must be put aside that the German ships were huddled together where the British battleships could have closed by simply steaming at them. On the contrary the German ships were always able to use these evasive tactics to save themselves from an overwhelming concentration of the stronger British fleet.

It is much more reasonable to accept the contention that the tactics of the battle culminated in a decision on the part of the British Admiral, made necessary by the approaching darkness. This is stated by Admiral Jellicoe himself: "The light was failing and it became necessary to decide on the disposition for the night. . . . Accordingly, at 9 P.M., I signalled to the Battle Fleet to alter course by divisions to south."

This should be recognized as the final decision of the battle, and the British Commander-in-Chief makes it plain that he so considered it, as he states the situation at the

time and the reasons which influenced him, springing from the considerations quoted, and summed up in another paragraph: "A third consideration that was present in my mind was the necessity for *not leaving anything to chance in a Fleet action, because our Fleet was the one and only factor that was vital to the existence of the Empire*, as indeed of the Allied cause. We had no reserve outside the Battle Fleet which could in any way take its place, should disaster befall it or even should its margin of superiority over the enemy be eliminated." (The italics are Lord Jellicoe's.)

The British Commander-in-Chief held that he was not justified in risking his fleet under the circumstances, and this decision ended the Battle of Jutland, so far as concerned an action of fleets. Lord Jellicoe's arguments show that he followed a line of conduct well considered in advance, and he writes with a sincere conviction that his act has been justified by the results.

After deciding not to continue the action, the British Admiral states that his fleet moved at seventeen knots through the night eighty-five miles from the battle field, and he also states that the light cruisers and destroyers were signaled to attend the Battle Fleet, thus confirming the account given that no attempt was made to keep in touch through the night by means of these craft.

The straggling of portions of his fleet during this move through the darkness is explained by Lord Jellicoe, and this caused him to delay his search for the German Fleet until he could pick up the missing craft. His return to find these was the reason for retracing the course of the night manoeuvre, which was commented upon in this review. The following is quoted from Lord Jellicoe's book: "The difficulty experienced in collecting the fleet (particularly the destroyers), due to the above causes, rendered it undesirable for the Battle Fleet to close the Horn Reef at daylight, as had been my intention when deciding to steer to the southward during the night. It was obviously necessary to concentrate the Battle Fleet and the destroyers before renewing action. By the time this concentration was effected it had become apparent that the High Seas Fleet, steering for the Horn Reef, had passed behind the shelter of the German mine-fields in the early morning on their way to their ports."

All of this establishes the contention that Admiral Jellicoe's decision at 9 P.M., May 31, not only ended the battle of fleets, but broke off all touch between the British and German fleets. Whether this decision was right or wrong should be the question at issue when considering the conduct of the action by the British Commander-in-Chief. The various side issues which have been raised should not be allowed to distract attention from the main question.

In respect to the tactics of the British advance force, one thing that was pointed out in the preceding account has never been sufficiently explained. This was the failure of Vice-Admiral Beatty to make better use of the four Queen Elizabeth dreadnoughts in combination with his six battle cruisers. All official reports confirm the statement that after the first news of the presence of the German advance force, over an hour passed before Sir David Beatty increased speed to engage. Yet this strongest part of Vice-Admiral Beatty's force was trundled along behind at so great a distance that it was of no appreciable value in the first stage of the action.

It is hard to explain this situation except by the reason given, that Vice-Admiral Beatty was confident that his six battle cruisers alone would be able to cope with the enemy. Admiral Jellicoe's book shows that the two parts of the British advance force had not become so far separated that it was impossible for them to be united in an hour's time. It is probable that Vice-Admiral Beatty's confidence came from his experience of the former German raids, which were made by cruisers and battle cruisers. Allowing his force to remain divided by such an interval was unfortunate, and it cannot be said that the best use was made of the British advance force in the first stage of the engagement.

Another grave defect in the conduct of the advance force has also been made evident. The disposition of the fleet and of the advance force was proper, as stated in this review, if there were tactical coördination between the separated parts. It is impossible to say that this existed, and the imperfect information given by Admiral Beatty to the Commander-in-Chief is a notable feature of the battle.

With all allowance for the damage to the wireless, es-



pecially on the *Lion*, it is hard to see why Lord Jellicoe should have been so badly informed as to the positions of the ships engaged, and why definite information should have been so long delayed. Admiral Jellicoe says: "The first definite information received on board the Fleet Flagship of the position of the enemy's Battle Fleet did not, therefore, come until 6:14 P.M." The *Lion* was still able to signal, as Lord Jellicoe reports her making signal at that time. Communication might also have been established through the cruisers. In this important phase of the tactics of the battle we are forced to the conclusion that all means were not taken to insure the coördination of the advance force and the Grand Fleet. This disposition of the British forces had often been used, and the logical aim of the sweep of the North Sea was to find and engage the enemy. Yet, when this happened, it is evident that methods had not been developed of using the whole force as parts of one great manoeuvre.

This failure on the part of Vice-Admiral Beatty to give information to his Commander-in-Chief does away with the contention that Lord Jellicoe might have been ready to deploy with Admiral Beatty at once, to force a decision with their joined forces before the Germans could make use of mist and smoke and darkness. With the uncertain information that Admiral Jellicoe possessed as to what was going on, any such joint manoeuvre could only have taken place through a miracle of luck.

The reader must realize that the publication of Lord Jellicoe's book makes the Battle of Jutland unique among great naval battles in one respect. It is the first instance of a Commander-in-Chief frankly stating his whole case, following the action. This gives Lord Jellicoe's book great importance, and all his statements are worthy of consideration.

Lord Jellicoe confirms the account of the slight part taken by aircraft, almost negligible so far as concerned any effect upon the tactics of the battle. He also makes a statement of the comparatively small number of hits scored by torpedoes in the action. Yet all through his narrative is felt the moral effect of the threat of torpedo attacks as a weapon of the weaker German fleet, which was not strong enough to

exchange broadsides in the old-fashioned way, and yet possessed a new element of offense. This was formidable enough, in conditions of smoke and darkness, to compel the Commander-in-Chief of the stronger fleet to decide that the battle could not be continued without too great a risk.

Lord Jellicoe makes a very strong case for his contention that, under the existing conditions of smoke, mist, and darkness, with the German fleet skilfully taking advantage of these conditions, and with the handicaps of the Grand Fleet in construction, equipment, and methods to contend with these tactics and conditions, there was no opportunity to force a decision without prohibitive risks of losing the existing supremacy of the British Navy on the seas.

Closely following the lead of the British Admiral, the German Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Scheer, has given his version of the Battle of Jutland in his book, "Germany's High Seas Fleet in the World War." It should be said at once that the German Admiral's story of the action is straightforward and has every evidence of truth. His book disposes of many tales that have come from Germany in regard to the battle.

This combination of the accounts of both commanders after a great naval action is unprecedented, and no room is left for misunderstandings concerning the main events of the battle. Even Lord Jellicoe had indulged in theories as to the object of the German sortie and the movements that led to the engagement. Admiral Scheer has ended these speculations, and has shown that the raid was made as described in the text, with the hope, frankly expressed by the German Admiral, that the British naval forces would give him an opportunity to engage under conditions advantageous for himself.

Admiral Scheer's account agrees with that of Admiral Jellicoe to an astonishing extent, when the wide field of action is taken into consideration. The engagement between the two advance forces, the advent of the German High Seas Fleet and the running fight to meet the British Grand Fleet, are related in confirmation of Lord Jellicoe's report.

The German Commander-in-Chief's book should be studied closely in regard to the situation at the stage of the

action when the two main fleets were approaching one another. It will be evident to the reader, as stated in this review, that it was a difficult task to concentrate an overwhelming force against the German fleet, which was so fully prepared to use evasive tactics in the prevailing conditions of intermittent fog.

After the breaking off of the action, the German "Main Fleet in close formation was to make for Horn's Reef by the shortest route." Admiral Scheer had expected a renewal of the battle of fleets, but, through his information by airship scouts (L11 was the airship reported by the British in the early morning), the German Admiral learned of the straggling of Lord Jellicoe's ships, and assumed that this was the reason the battle was not resumed. It will be noted in the preceding review that this was the reason given by Lord Jellicoe for delaying the attempt to engage.

Admiral Scheer's account of the return of his fleet to its bases, and the condition of his ships, seems convincing — and there is no ground for doubting the German statement of losses. He tells of trying to bring in the *Lutzow* until she was so down by the head that her screws spun in the air, when the Germans took off her crew and torpedoed the ship. The *Seydlitz* had great difficulty in making her berth, and the *Derfflinger* was also seriously damaged. To sum up the damage done to the battle cruisers of both fleets makes a sorry showing, for this type of warship, which had so great a vogue before The World War.

Admiral Scheer states that, with the exception of his two battle cruisers, the German fleet was repaired and ready to go to sea again by the middle of August, and the *Bayern* (the first German warship to mount 38 c.m.-guns) had been added to the fleet. He also gives an account of another sortie (August 18 to 20, 1916). Later in the year the German fleet was reinforced by the *Baden* (38 c.m.-guns) and the battle cruiser *Hindenburg*, but at the end of 1916 the function of the High Seas Fleet was to keep the gates for the U-boats in the great German submarine campaign.

## THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND

(This chart is diagrammatic only)

(May 31, 1916)

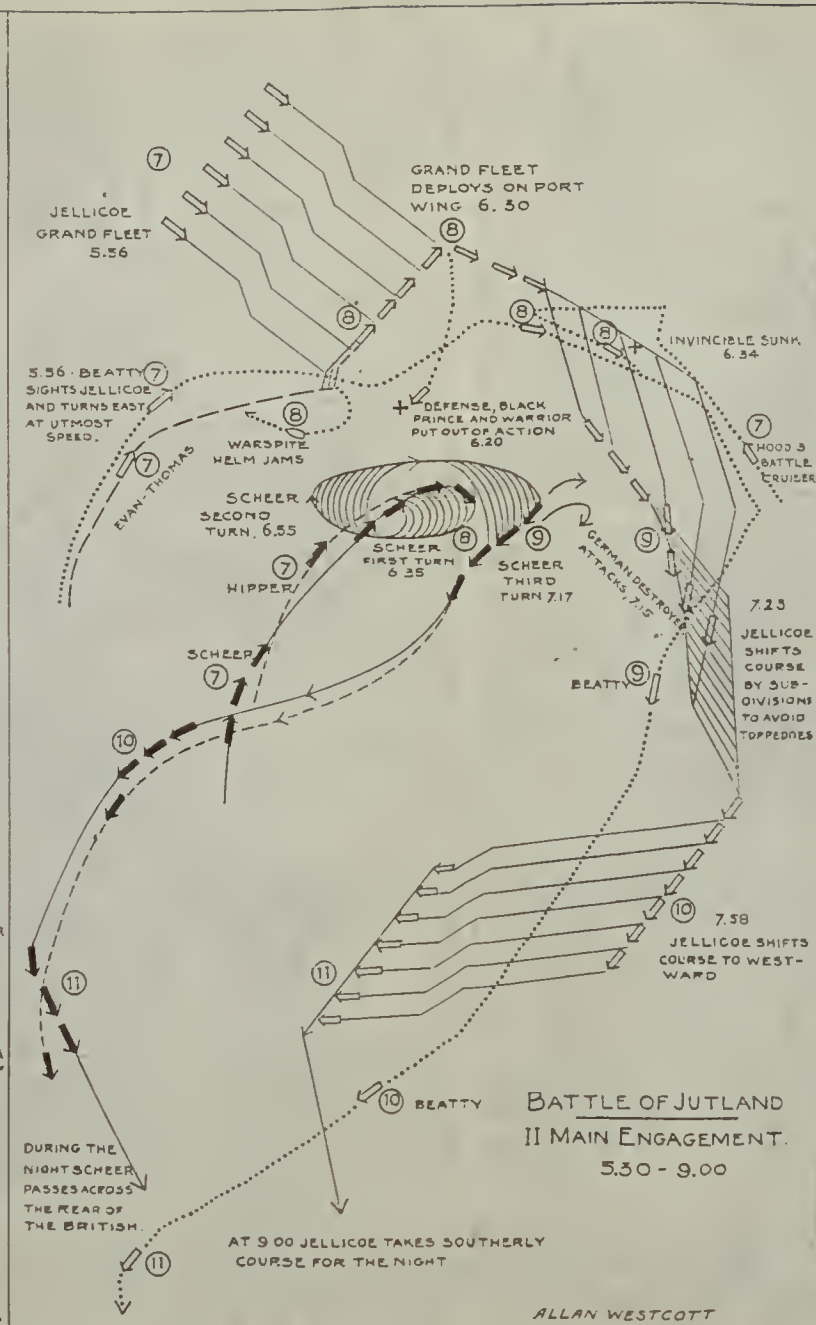
### I. BATTLE CRUISER ACTION

- ① 3.30 P.M. Beatty sights Hipper.
- ② 3.48 P.M. Battle cruisers engage at 18,500 yds., "both forces opening fire practically simultaneously."
- ③ 4.06 P.M. *Indefatigable* sunk.
- ④ 4.42 P.M. Beatty sights High Seas Fleet, and turns north (column right about).
- ⑤ 4.57 P.M. Evan-Thomas turns north, covering Beatty.
- ⑥ 5.35 P.M. Beatty's force, pursued by German battle cruisers and High Seas Fleet, on northerly course at long range.

### II. MAIN ENGAGEMENT

- ⑦ 5.56 P.M. Beatty sights Jellicoe and shifts to easterly course at utmost speed.
- ⑧ 6.20-7.00 P.M. Jellicoe deploys on port wing column (deployment "complete" at 6.38). Beatty takes position ahead of Grand Fleet. Hood takes station ahead of Beatty. Evan-Thomas falls in astern of Grand Fleet.
- Scheer turns whole German fleet to west (ships right about) at 6.35, covered by smoke screens. Scheer repeats the turn of the whole fleet (ships right about) to east at 6.55.
- ⑨ 7.17 P.M. Scheer for the third time makes "swing-around" of whole German fleet (ships right about) to southwest, under cover of smoke screens and destroyer attacks. Jellicoe turns away to avoid torpedoes (7.23).
- ⑩ 8.00 P.M.
- ⑪ 8.30-9.00 P.M. Jellicoe disposes for the night.







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## TABLE OF DATES OF THE WORLD WAR

1914-1918

From the nature of the events of the War, especially as operations usually extended over many days, it is out of the question to give a list of definite dates, as in the records of other wars; but the following will show the chronological sequence of The World War.

1914

June, 1914

- 28—Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and the Duchess of Hohenberg at Sarajevo, Bosnia, by Serbian student named Gavrio Prinsep.

July, 1914

- 23—Austrian note to Serbia, demanding the suppression of Pan-Serbianism and the punishment of the assassins.  
25—Serbia concedes all of Austria's demands save that of Austrian participation in the investigation of the murder.  
Austrian note to Serbia saying the latter's reply was unsatisfactory. Ambassador leaves Belgrade.  
27—England's appeal to Austria, Serbia, and Russia to suspend hostilities pending a coöperative mediation conference.  
28—Austria declares war on Serbia and hostilities commence, after Germany and Austria refuse England's invitation to a conference.  
29—Bombardment of Belgrade begun by Austrians. Germany and Italy continue to try to localize war.  
Russia mobilizes troops for Austrian frontier. Germany also sends troops to Russian frontier.  
31—Germany sends ultimatum to Russia, giving her twenty-four hours to explain her intentions in regard to mobilization.  
General Russian mobilization ordered; martial law declared in Germany.  
Stock markets all over the world close their doors.

## August, 1914

- 1—Germany formally declares war on Russia and troops are ordered mobilized.
- 3—Germany declares war on France.
- 3/4—Germany declares war on Belgium.  
German troops invade Belgium, Germany's request for an entente having been refused.  
Germany violates neutrality pact and seizes Luxemburg.  
France regards German invasion of Belgium as an act of war.  
Italy proclaims her neutrality.
- 4—War declared by Great Britain on Germany.  
Germans begin their attack on Liège.  
Serbians defeat invading Austrians.
- 5—Lord Kitchener made Secretary of War in Great Britain.  
Austria-Hungary declares war against Russia.
- 6—Holland declares her neutrality.
- 7—Belgians evacuate city of Liège.  
Russians invade East Prussia.  
U. S. S. Tennessee leaves with \$6,000,000 in gold for Europe for stranded Americans.  
British troops seize Togoland on the gold coast of Africa.  
French capture Altkirch, in Alsace.
- 9—French occupy Mülhausen.  
Serbia declares war on Germany.
- 11—Germans penetrate France over the Luxemburg frontier.
- 12—England declares war on Austria-Hungary.
- 15—Reduction of last of Liège forts.  
Japanese ultimatum to Germany.
- 17—Germans in Louvain. Belgian Government moved to Antwerp.  
Announcement that British army is on continent.
- 20—Russians at Gumbinnen, East Prussia.  
Brussels occupied by the Germans.  
Bombardment of Namur begins.  
French in Alsace repulsed at Morhange.
- 22—Battle of Charleroi.  
Germans in Namur.  
Serbian victory on the Dvina.  
Germans in Ghent.
- 23—Battle of Mons, Joffre begins to withdraw his armies.  
Russians at Insterberg, East Prussia.  
Austrians driven out of Serbia.  
Japan declares war on Germany.
- 24—Allies retreat across the Meuse.

August, 1914 — *Continued.*

- 25—Last of Namur forts taken.  
Louvain destroyed by the Germans.
- 26—Battle of Tannenberg begins.  
Togoland surrenders to Great Britain.
- 27—Allies retreat to the Somme.  
Lille, Roubaix, and Valenciennes occupied by the Germans.  
Russians take Tarnopol and advance on Lemberg.
- 28—Longwy surrenders to the Germans.  
La Fère captured by the Germans.  
British naval victory off Heligoland.
- 29—New Zealanders occupy German Samoa.
- 30—Germans capture Amiens, Allies retreating.  
Samsonoff's Russian army destroyed at Tannenberg, followed by retreat of Rennenkampf's army.

## September, 1914

- 1—Germans occupy Soissons.  
Battle of Lemberg in Galicia begun.
- 3—Germans at the Marne, and French Government moved to Bordeaux. Kluck's army moving to southeast.  
End of Battle of Lemberg. Costly Austrian defeat. Lemberg taken by Russians.
- 5—Germans in Rheims.  
End of Allied retreat — Joffre prepares to take offensive.
- 6—Allied offensive — Battle of the Marne begins.
- 6/10—German defeat in Battle of the Marne — Army of Hausen in confusion, armies of Kluck and Bülow in retreat.
- 12—Germans make good their retreat to intrenched line of Aisne.  
Joffre attacks in Battle of the Aisne.  
Battle of Masurian Lakes, end of East Prussian invasion.
- 15—French reoccupy Rheims.  
German counter-attacks on the Aisne.  
Austrian invasion defeated in Serbia.
- 18—Both sides intrenched on line of the Aisne.
- 22—Przemysl invested by Russians.  
German submarine U-9 sinks British cruisers Aboukir, Cressy, and Hogue.  
Russians capture Jaroslau in Galicia.
- 23—French capture Péronne.
- 23—Germans take St. Mihiel.
- 26—Russians across the San.
- 29—Antwerp forts bombarded.
- 30—French in Arras.



## October, 1914

- 1—Antwerp southern forts destroyed.
- 3—Transfer of British army to Flanders begun.
- 5—British Marines in Antwerp.  
German raid toward Warsaw.
- 7—Japanese capture the Carolina group.
- 9—Germans capture Antwerp.
- 13—Germans occupy Ghent.  
British advance toward Lille.  
Germans occupy Lille.  
Dutch element in South Africa revolts.
- 14—Allies in Ypres.  
Germans attacking near Warsaw.
- 15—Siege of Przemyśl raised.
- 16—Germans occupy Ostend and Zeebrugge.  
Rebel Colonel Maritz's force defeated in South Africa.
- 16—Battle of the Yser begins.
- 19—Transfer of British to Flanders completed.
- 20—Allied line complete to coast of North Sea.  
First Battle of Ypres begun.  
Hindenberg begins withdrawal from before Warsaw.
- 23—American commission organized in London to save Belgians from starvation.
- 26—Generals De Wet and Beyers start new rebellion in South Africa.
- 27/28—British hard pressed in Battle of Ypres.
- 29—Turkey in the war.
- 30—Belgians force Germans back across the Yser by inundating the country (Battle of the Yser).  
Russia declares war on Turkey.  
Russians reoccupy Czernowitz, Bukowina.
- 31—Crisis of Battle of Ypres — British line forced back.

## November, 1914

- 1—French troops arrive at Ypres.  
Germans take Messines.  
British naval defeat, Battle of Coronel.  
Advance of Russians beyond the Vistula.
- 2—Germans evacuate left bank of the Yser.  
British line pierced near Neuve Chapelle (Battle of Ypres).
- 3—Russians again cross the San.
- 5—British line at Ypres reestablished.  
Renewed invasion of Serbia by Austrians.  
Russians again capture Jaroslau, Galicia.

November, 1914 — *Continued.*

- 7—Japanese capture Kiauchau.
- 9—Germans surrender Tsingtau.  
German cruiser Emden driven ashore and burned by Australian cruiser Sydney.
- 11—Germans capture Dixmude.
- 12—Second German offensive against Poland begun.  
De Wet rebel forces routed by Botha.
- 17—End of First Battle of Ypres.
- 23—Russians defeated in region of Lodz.

## December, 1914

- 1—De Wet captured in South Africa.
- 2—Austrians occupy Belgrade.
- 3—Serbians suddenly attack Austrian invaders and inflict defeat.
- 5—Russians badly beaten and driven from Lodz.
- 6—Germans occupy Lodz.  
Serbians complete the defeat of the Austrians (Battle of the Ridges).
- 7—Germans again make an attempt on Warsaw.
- 8—German naval defeat, Battle of Falkland Islands.
- 15—Serbians reoccupy Belgrade, Austrians driven out of Serbia.
- 16—Germans raid British seacoast towns of Scarborough, Hartlepool, and Whitby.
- 17—Egypt declared a British protectorate.
- 28—Germans fail in attempt on Warsaw.
- 29—Battle begins between Russians and Turks in Caucasus.

## 1915

## January, 1915

- 1—Turkish disaster in the Caucasus.
- 8/15—Fighting near Soissons.
- 17—Russians gain in Bukowina.
- 24—Naval action off Dogger Bank in North Sea.
- 26—German Government control of all stocks of grain.

## February, 1915

- 2—Turkish attack on the Suez Canal.  
British Government makes foodstuffs contraband.
- 3—Germans again advance on Warsaw.  
Russians again capture Stanislaw.
- 4—Turks north of Suez routed by British.

**February, 1915 — Continued.**

- 7—Defeat of Russian invasion of East Prussia (The Winter Battle, Feb. 7-21).
- 18—German policy of "war zones" about Great Britain put into effect.
- 19—Attempt upon the Dardanelles begins with a bombardment by the fleet.
- 23—South African union forces, under General Botha, invade German West Africa.
- 24—Germans capture Przasnysz, advancing into Poland.
- 25/26—Renewed bombardment of the Dardanelles forts.
- 26—Russians recapture Przasnysz.
- 28—Germans retreat from Poland.

**March, 1915**

- 1—Great Britain declares virtual blockade of German coast.
- 4—Bombardment of Dardanelles forts.
- 6/7—Bombardment of Dardanelles forts.
- 8—Great Britain bars cotton from Germany.
- 10—Prinz Eitel Friedrich, German auxiliary cruiser, puts into Newport News, announces sinking of American ship William P. Frye.
- 10/12—Battle of Neuve Chapelle.
- 14—German counter-attack at St. Eloi.
- 18—Great attack of Allied fleet at Dardanelles repulsed, with loss of three capital ships.
- 22—Przemysl surrenders to the Russians.

**April, 1915**

- 5—America demands reparation from Germany for sinking of the William P. Frye.
- 9—Germany agrees to compensate owners for sinking of the William P. Frye.
- 17—British offensive in Flanders begins ("Hill 60").
- 18/21—Fighting for Hill 60 and bombardment of Ypres.
- 22—Second Battle of Ypres begun — German gas attack.
- 25/26—Landings at Gallipoli, with great British losses.
- 28—Austro-German attack near Gorlice.

**May, 1915**

- 1/2—First great artillery attacks of Austro-German offensive. Battle of the Dunajec (German Gorlice-Tarnow). Dunajec-Biala line broken and Russians in retreat.

**May, 1915 — Continued.**

- 3—British line at Ypres shortened.
- 7—Austro-Germans cross Wisloka at Jaslo.  
British liner Lusitania sunk by German submarine off Kinsale, Ireland.
- 8—Germans announce capture of Libau.
- 9—French Battle of the Artois begun. British attacks in region of Festubert.
- 13—President Wilson sends note to Germany demanding reparation for loss of American lives on Lusitania and insisting that submarine attacks on merchant vessels carrying non-combatants stop at once.
- 14—Austro-Germans at the San, Russians in retreat.
- 16—British Battle of Festubert begun.
- 19—Coalition Ministry in Great Britain announced.
- 23—Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary, and at once attacks toward Trent and Trieste.
- 26—End of British attacks near Festubert.
- 31—German reply to American note on Lusitania seeks delay.

**June, 1915**

- 3—Austro-Germans recapture Przemysl.
- 5—Lloyd George Minister of Munitions.
- 10—President Wilson sends another note to Germany demanding reparation for Lusitania victims and pledge not to repeat attacks on merchantmen without observing international rules.
- 12—Russians in retreat in Galicia.
- 22—Lemberg taken by Austro-Germans.
- 28—Haliez retaken by Austro-Germans.

**July, 1915**

- 5—United States declines to negotiate informally with Germany on Berlin's expected reply to submarine note.  
German Southwest Africa surrendered to British forces under General Botha after a five months' campaign.
- 6—Fighting at Krasnik and on the Niemen.
- 14—Great attack from north and south on Warsaw salient begun.
- 15—National Registration in Great Britain.
- 19—Passage of the Bug forced by the Germans.
- 20—Germans take Windau.
- 21—Germans seize Vistula crossings.
- 22/23—Ivangorod invested and Narew crossed.
- 28—Germans across the Vistula.



July, 1915 — *Continued.*

- 29/30—Russian lines broken, Lublin and Chulm lost.
- 31—Germans capture Mitau.

## August, 1915

- 4—Fall of Ivangorod.
- 5—Warsaw evacuated by the Russians.
- 6/10—Landing and fighting at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli. Heavy British losses.
- 17—Germans take Kovno.
- 19—White Star liner Arabic torpedoed and sunk.
- 20—Russian fortress of Novogeorgievsk captured.
- 23/31—Fall of Russian fortresses — Ossowitz, Brest-Litovsk, Bialystok, Olita, and Lutsk captured.

## September, 1915

- 1—Germany agrees to sink no more liners without warning, Bernstorff notifies State Department.
- 2—Grodno surrendered to Germans.
- 5—Czar takes command of Russian armies. Grand Duke Nicholas sent to Caucasus.
- 16/18—Germans occupy Pinsk and Vilna.
- 22—Bulgaria orders mobilization of her army.
- 24—Greece orders mobilization of her land and sea forces.
- 25—Great Allied double attack on Noyon salient begun, after bombardment. French Battle of the Champagne. British Battle of Loos.
- 29—General Townshend's Bagdad expedition takes Kut-el-Amara. Renewed French attacks in the Champagne.
- 30—Critical time at Battle of Loos.

## October, 1915

- 2—Greek Government protests against landing of Allied troops at Saloniki.
- 3—Russians defend Dvinsk.
- 5—Allied Army landed at Saloniki.
- 7—Austro-German invasion of Serbia begins.
- 9—Austro-Germans occupy Belgrade.
- 10—Bulgarians invade Serbia.  
Greece refuses to aid Serbia.
- 12—Edith Cavell executed.
- 15—Great Britain declares war on Bulgaria.
- 16—France declares war on Bulgaria.
- 16/30—Serbia overrun (Veles, Uskup, Kragujevatz, taken).

## November, 1915

- 5—Germans repulsed at Riga.
- 6—Nish captured.
- 22—Battle of Ctesiphon, Mesopotamia.
- 25—Serbian army retreats into Albania.
- 26—British retreat from Ctesiphon.

## December, 1915

- 3—Townshend's force besieged in Kut-el-Amara.
- 5—Austro-Germans occupy Monastir.
- 8—British evacuation of Gallipoli begun.
- 15—Sir Douglas Haig Commander-in-Chief of British armies in France.
- 20—Suvla and Anzac (Dardanelles) evacuated.
- 20—Italian troops in Albania.
- 25—Saloniki in a state of defense.
- 30—Austrian note on Ancona yields, punishing submarine commander and admitting principle of safety of passengers.

## 1916

## January, 1916

- 5—Military Service Bill in Parliament (conscription).
- 8—Entire Gallipoli peninsula evacuated by the Allies.
- 13—Austrians enter Cetinje.
- 16—Battle in the Caucasus — Turks retreat to Erzerum.
- 23—Austrians occupy Scutari, and are in possession of Montenegro.

## February, 1916

- 1—British steamer Appam, supposed to have been lost, brought into Norfolk, Va., by German prize crew.
- 14—Russians take Erzerum.
- 21—Great German offensive against Verdun begun.
- 22/25—German gains at Verdun.  
Fort Douaumont plateau captured.
- 26—French counter-attacks at Verdun.

## March, 1916

- 6/14—Heavy fighting at Verdun.
- 10—Germany declares war on Portugal.

*March, 1916 — Continued.*

- 17—Admiral Tirpitz, German naval head, retired.
- 19—Ispahan, old capital of Persia, taken by Czar's troops.
- 24—Channel steamer Sussex torpedoed, with Americans on board.
- 27—Wilson demands Germany explain attack on steamer Sussex.
- 31—Germans storm Malancourt, Verdun.

*April, 1916*

- 2—French gain between Douaumont and Vaux, Verdun.
- 4—New British budget \$9,000,000,000, largest in world's history.
- 6—Germans capture Haucourt Village, Verdun.
- 10—German general offensive from Hill 304 to Fort Douaumont, Verdun.
- 11—Germany admits torpedoing several steamers, but not the Sussex.
- 18—Ultimatum on Sussex torpedoing sent to Germany.  
President Wilson summons Congress to tell why he is forced to send ultimatum.  
Russians capture Trebizond.
- 24—Irish revolt in Dublin, 12 persons being killed.
- 28—British garrison at Kut-el-Amara, Mesopotamia, surrenders to Turks.

*May, 1916*

- 1—Irish rebellion ended. Irish leaders executed.
- 5—Germany yields to ultimatum of United States in Sussex case.  
Definite promise that illegal acts would cease.
- 14—Austrian offensive in the Trentino begun.
- 15/25—Austrian gains against the Italians.
- 19/30—Hard fighting at Verdun in regions of Douaumont and Vaux.
- 28/31—Austrians on Italian soil, the Italians retreating from Asiago and Arsiero.
- 31—Battle of Jutland, great naval action in North Sea.

*June, 1916*

- 4—Sudden renewal of offensive by Russian armies in Volhynia and Galicia. Heavy losses for Austrians.
- 7—Earl Kitchener and staff drowned when British cruiser Hampshire is sunk on way to Russia.  
Germans win Fort Vaux in Verdun region.  
Russians capture Lutsk.
- 10/17—Russian gains, especially in Bukowina. Czernowitz captured.

*June, 1916 — Continued.*

- 21/24—Heavy German attacks at Verdun.  
Russians hold most of Bukowina.
- 27/30—French gains at Verdun.

*July, 1916*

- 1—Battle of the Somme begun, after week of heavy bombardment.  
Initial gains — Heavy British losses.
- 4—Russian offensive resumed at the Styr River.
- 6—Lloyd George British War Secretary.
- 7—Russians reach the Stochod.
- 10—German merchant submarine Deutschland reaches Baltimore.
- 14—Renewed attacks in Battle of the Somme.
- 27—Russians capture Brody.

*August, 1916*

- 1—Fighting at Verdun and at the Somme.  
Russians fighting for Kovel.  
Italians bombard Austrian positions on Isonzo — Offensive against Gorizia begun.
- 3—Russian advance checked on the Stochod.  
Roger Casement hanged for high treason.
- 8—Italians capture Gorizia.
- 9—Germans execute Captain Fryatt.
- 10—Russians capture Stanislau.
- 18—General attacks in Battle of the Somme.
- 23—Deutschland reaches Germany.
- 28—Germany declares war on Rumania.  
Italy declares war on Germany.
- 29—Hindenburg German Chief-of-Staff.

*September, 1916*

- 1—Allied warships anchor off Athens.
- 3—Germans and Bulgarians invade Dobrudja.  
Fighting at Verdun and on the Somme.
- 9—Bulgar-Germans invade Rumania and capture Silistria.
- 12—Greek army corps goes over to the Germans.
- 14—Italian attacks in the Carso.
- 15—Great British attack in Battle of the Somme — Tanks in action for first time.
- 16—Rumanians retreat in Dobrudja.
- 19—Allies blockade coast of Greece.



**September, 1916 — Continued.**

- 25—Venizelos leaves Athens.  
Heavy fighting in Battle of the Somme.

**October, 1916**

- 5—Rumanian withdrawal in Transylvania.  
7—U-53, German submarine, reaches Newport, R. I., from Wilhelmshaven.  
8—U-53 sinks British and neutral steamers off Nantucket, survivors rescued by United States warships.  
13—Germans invade Rumania.  
16—Entente Powers recognize provisional Government set up by former Greek Premier Venizelos.  
17—Allied forces occupy Athens, seize entire Greek navy and take over railroads, forts, etc.  
22—Mackensen captures Constanza.  
24—French recapture Fort Douaumont.

**November, 1916**

- 1—Germans evacuate Fort Vaux, Verdun.  
German submarine Deutschland reaches New London on second trip from Bremen.  
5—Teuton successes against the Rumanians.  
16—Rumanian retirement continues.  
18—Monastir captured by the Entente forces in Macedonia.  
21—Emperor Franz Josef of Austria dies.  
25—Teuton armies unite in Rumania. Rumanian position hopeless.  
28—Greek Provisional Government declares war against Germany.

**December, 1916**

- 5—Fall of Asquith Ministry in Great Britain.  
6—Austro-Germans capture Bucharest.  
Lloyd George heads the new War Cabinet in Great Britain.  
12—Germany and her allies propose peace.  
Gen. Nivelle given command of French armies.  
13—British advance in Mesopotamia.  
15—French smash German lines at Verdun.  
18—British premier announces in Parliament Allies reject German peace proposal; reparation and restitution only basis on which they will talk peace.

**December, 1916 — Continued.**

- 20—Rumanians in retreat, and by the end of the year retire into Moldavia.  
21—President Wilson asks for statements of peace terms.  
23—German General Staff approves unrestricted submarine warfare.  
30—Allies reject German peace proposals.

**1917****January, 1917**

- 9—Allies state specific terms at request of President Wilson.  
24—Germans surrender in East Africa.

**February, 1917**

- 1—Germany begins U-boat blockade of Great Britain; warns neutrals that all ships entering zone will be sunk without warning.  
3—President Wilson severs relations with Germany.  
10—Replies from various capitals show neutrals decline to accept Wilson's invitation to break with Germany.  
British passenger steamer California sunk without warning.  
16—British war loan of over £1,000,000,000 closed.  
26—President asks Congress for authority to use armed forces to protect American rights and shipping.  
Cunard liner Laconia torpedoed.  
British advance in Mesopotamia.  
28—American consuls held as hostage by Germany, pending departure of Teuton representatives in this country.

**March, 1917**

- 1—Washington reveals plot of Germany to induce Mexico and Japan to invade United States. (Zimmermann note.)  
3—German Foreign-Secretary Zimmermann admits Mexican-Japanese plot.  
6—Austria, in reply to the United States, stands by U-boat ruthless warfare.  
7—President decides to arm ships despite Congress' refusal to approve.  
11—Russian revolution begins.  
British capture Bagdad.  
13—British advance in spring offensive  
15—Czar abdicates.

*March, 1917 — Continued.*

- 15/28—German retirement to new Hindenburg Line developed, the British occupying Bapaume, Péronne, and a wide area in the Somme region.

*April, 1917*

- 2—Wilson asks Congress to declare state of war exists with Germany.  
 4—Senate votes for war.  
 6—House of Representatives passes war resolution.  
     Wilson signs declaration of war.  
     Seizure of German ships in American ports begun.  
 8—Austria severs relations with United States.  
 9—British begin Battle of Arras — Canadians take Vimy Ridge.  
 16—Gen. Nivelle's offensive begun (Second Battle of the Aisne).  
 21—British commission under Foreign Secretary Balfour arrives in America.  
 24—President Wilson signs \$7,000,000,000 war bond bill.  
 25—Marshal Joffre arrives in Washington.  
 28—British renew Arras offensive.  
     Failure of Gen. Nivelle's offensive to gain results.

*May, 1917*

- 3—British attacks in Battle of Arras.  
 4—Changes in British Admiralty.  
 6—Allied War Council meets in Paris.  
 8—Federal Shipping Board plans \$1,000,000,000 appropriation for building wooden ships to foil submarines.  
 11—American Commission to Russia named by Wilson; Elihu Root, chairman.  
 14—Italian offensive on the Carso.  
 15—Gen. Nivelle superseded by Gen. Pétain in command of French armies. Gen. Foch French Chief of General Staff.  
 18—President signs draft bill calling up all men between twenty-one and thirty, inclusive.  
 24—Italians continue drive.

*June, 1917*

- 1—Wilson sends message to Russia outlining American aims in war.  
 4—Root commission reaches Russian soil.  
 6—British capture Messines-Wytschaete salient; 1,000,000 pounds of explosives used in greatest mining operation in history.

*June, 1917 — Continued.*

- 8—General Pershing, American Commander, reaches England.  
 12—King Constantine of Greece abdicates.  
 13—Pershing arrives in Paris.  
 14—Liberty Loan of \$2,000,000,000 oversubscribed.  
 16—Italians renew offensive.  
 27—American Expeditionary contingent reaches France.

*July, 1917*

- 2—Russian troops, urged on by Kerensky, in temporary offensive. Initial successes in Galicia.  
 10—President Wilson calls National Guard into Federal service.  
 13—Washington formally issues first draft call for 687,000 men.  
 17—Bethmann-Hollweg, German Chancellor, resigns.  
 20—National draft made; nearly 10,000,000 men listed.  
 25—Austro-Germans recapture Stanislaw, and Tarnopol. Russians continue retreat.  
 31—Battle of Flanders begun — Offensive in attempt to win Belgian coast (Third Battle of Ypres).

*August, 1917*

- 2—Russians begin general retreat in Galicia.  
 3—Government takes over all merchant ships over 2500 tons building in United States.  
 6—Changes in German cabinet; Kuhlmann succeeds Zimmermann as Foreign Secretary.  
 10—President Wilson signs food control bill.  
 13—Greece definitely at war with Central Powers, British Minister, Bonar Law, announces.  
 14—Pope proposes peace virtually on "status quo ante" basis.  
 19—French assault at Verdun recovers positions.  
 21—Two-thirds of Saloniki, Greece, destroyed by fire.  
 29—Wilson replies to Pope, declining proposal and declaring no terms can be made with existing German Government.  
     Battle of Flanders continued.  
     Italian offensive begun.

*September, 1917*

- 2—Germans take Riga.  
 12—Argentina presents passports to German envoy Luxburg.  
 16—Kerensky declares Russia a republic.  
     Germany apologizes to Sweden over Luxburg incident.  
 20—Battle of Flanders renewed.



## October, 1917

- 1—Second Liberty Loan, \$3,000,000,000.
- 4/10—Attacks in Battle of Flanders.
- 13—Germans seize Riga Islands from Russians.
- 23—German Chancellor Michaelis resigns.
- 24—Battle of the Caporetto begun — Surprise offensive against the Italians — Italian lines broken.
- 30—Austro-Germans capture Udine, Cadorna's headquarters; Italian armies in general retreat.

## November, 1917

- 1—British announce capture of Beersheba, Palestine.  
Kerensky announces that Russia is war weary, and that Allies must shoulder burden of struggle.
- 5—Italian general retreat on Trentino and Tagliamento fronts.
- 7—British capture Gaza, Palestine.
- 8—Petrograd announces Premier Kerensky deposed — Bolsheviks seize control of government.
- 20—Battle of Cambrai. Successful British attack, using tanks.
- 24—Bolsheviks begin negotiations with Teutonic Allies for armistice.
- 30—German counter-attack at Cambrai. British reverse.

## December, 1917

- 1—United States war estimates for 1917-18 more than \$11,000,000,000.
- 4—President Wilson asks Congress to declare war on Austria.  
Allies complete capture of German East Africa.
- 6—Explosion of French munition ship at Halifax — Great destruction of lives and property.
- 9—British capture Jerusalem from the Turks.
- 17—Armistice between Germans and Russian Bolsheviks.
- 27—Germany, through Brest-Litovsk conference, offers peace terms to Entente Allies on basis of no annexations and no indemnities.
- 28—United States Government takes over the railroads.

## 1918

## January, 1918

- 7—United States Supreme Court upholds draft law.
- 8—President Wilson states the "Fourteen Points" for basis of peace.

January, 1918 — *Continued.*

- 10—Central Powers withdraw peace terms made public at the Brest-Litovsk conference with the Bolsheviks.
- 28—President Wilson appeals to people voluntarily to ration themselves.

## February, 1918

- 9—Ukraine signs peace treaty with Central Powers.
- 11—Bolsheviks declare war with Central Powers at an end; troops ordered demobilized.
- 15—Wilson places embargo on all cargo space to insure movement of troops and war supplies to Europe.
- 19—Germans resume invasion of Russia, to force peace on Russians.
- 21—British forces in Palestine capture Jericho.

## March, 1918

- 2—Peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Germans and Russian Bolsheviks.
- 21—Great German offensive begun with drive against British front (Battle of Picardy).
- 23—British defense broken at point west of St. Quentin, forcing withdrawal of battle line over wide front.  
Paris bombarded by long-range German gun.  
Arrangement for French troops to take over Noyon sector.
- 25/28—Péronne, Bapaume, Albert, Roye, Noyon, and Montdidier occupied by the Germans.
- 26—Gen. Foch given control to "coördinate" Allied armies.

## April, 1918

- 3—Gen. Foch given command of Allied and American armies.
- 9—Second great attack of the German offensive (Battle of the Lys).
- 10/11—British reverses. Capture of Armentières by the Germans.
- 15—Germans capture Messines heights; also Bailleul.  
Count Czernin, Austrian Foreign Minister, resigns.
- 23—British naval squadrons raid Zeebrugge and Ostend.
- 25—Germans capture Kemmel Hill, Flanders.

## May, 1918

- 1—Announced that alien property taken over by United States Government to date totals \$280,000,000.
- 21—Gen. March Chief of Staff.

*May, 1918 — Continued.*

- 27—Third assault of German offensive — French line broken and Chemin des Dames carried (Third Battle of the Aisne).
- 28—First American Division engaged at Cantigny.

*June, 1918*

- 3—U-boats raid American shipping off New Jersey coast.
- 4/7—Germans win Chateau-Thierry salient and are again on the Marne. American Marines engaged at Belleau Woods.
- 9—Germans launch the fourth attack of great offensive between Noyon and Montdidier.
- 15—Austrians attack in Italy, crossing the Piave.
- 19/23—Italians throw Austrians back across the Piave.
- 27—Second draft in United States.

*July, 1918*

- 2—Berlin reports 2476 guns, 15,024 machine guns captured since March 21, 1918.
- 4—Ninety-five ships launched in United States.
- 15—Germans launch offensive on French front from Chateau-Thierry to edge of Argonne forest (Second Battle of the Marne).
- 17—German troops driving toward Paris are checked by Franco-American defense.
- 18—French and Americans start counter-offensive between the Aisne and the Marne. German flank smashed.
- 22/29—Chateau-Thierry salient won from Germans.

*August, 1918*

- 2—Soissons retaken by the French.
- 2/5—Germans in retreat in Aisne-Ourcq region.
- 8—French and British launch offensive between Amiens and Montdidier.
- 10/28—Foch's offensives continued, Germans giving way on wide fronts — Montdidier, Péronne, Bapaume, Albert, and Noyon reoccupied.
- 29/31—Germans retreating in Flanders.

*September, 1918*

- 1/10—Germans in retreat from Soissons to the North Sea.
- 3—United States formally recognizes Czecho-Slovaks as co-belligerents.

*September, 1918 — Continued.*

- 12/13—St. Mihiel salient won by the Americans.  
13,000,000 men between ages of 31 and 45 and 18 and 21 register under new draft.
- 19—British rout Turkish army in Palestine.
- 22—Nazareth, captured from the Turks by British.
- 23/27—Saloniki army begins operations against the Bulgarians, with Serbians and Greeks cooperating.
- 26—Foch's final great offensive opened by Americans in Meuse-Argonne offensive and French in the Champagne.
- 27—Bulgaria asks for an armistice, following defeats in Macedonia.
- 27/29—Foch's offensive developed in successive attacks. British attack toward Cambrai, British and Belgian attacks in Flanders, attack toward St. Quentin.
- 30—Bulgaria accepts the Allied terms and surrenders. The terms include railway occupation, thus breaking direct German communication with Turkey.

*October, 1918*

- 1—British occupy Damascus.
- 1/5—Progress of Allied offensives — St. Quentin, Lens, and Armentières evacuated by Germans. Americans advance in Meuse-Argonne offensive.  
Italians clear Albania of enemy.
- 7—German official proposal for an armistice received in Washington; Austria sends similar note.
- 8—President rejects armistice proposals; evacuation of all invaded territory a condition precedent before there can be any talk of truce.
- 9—Allies capture Cambrai.
- 11/18—German defense crumbles — Chemin des Dames, Lille, Laon, La Fère, and Channel ports evacuated.
- 19—President Wilson rejects Austria's proposal for an armistice.
- 21—Wilson's reply to German truce proposal demands evacuation of all invaded territory and adequate guarantees.
- 24—Franco-American and British armies resume offensive in France and Flanders.  
Italians launch drive against the Austrians between the Brenta and the Piave, crossing river.
- 29—Italians break Austrian defense; enemy retreats.  
Austria asks for armistice.
- 31—Turkey unconditionally surrenders.



November, 1918

- 3—Austria agrees to armistice terms amounting to unconditional surrender.
- 3/11—Uninterrupted advance of Allied and American armies. Sedan and Mézières railway communications untenable.
- 7—Germany sends to Foch for armistice terms.  
Revolt breaks out in Germany; rebels seize Kiel, and most of the fleet, Hamburg and other important seaports and cities.
- 8—Foch meets German truce envoys inside French lines.
- 9—Emperor of Germany abdicates, it is officially announced.
- 11—Armistice signed — Kaiser and Crown Prince flee to Holland.  
Revolution in Germany; with soldiers' and people's government in control.



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FOR the reasons given in the Introduction, detailed histories of The World War are out of the question. It is equally impossible at this time to give a list of reading that would be in any sense adequate. The following suggestions should only be looked upon as an attempt to assist the reader, following the text of this book, in culling out the good from the bad among the great number of war-books which have been hurried to publication. It is only natural that these early writings cannot be free from bias. Even the narratives of the great leaders attempt to make the War keep step with their own acts.

In tracing the operations of the War beyond the scope of this book, the student should rely upon official sources as the only firm basis.

The French Official Communiqués have been published ("Pages d'Histoire," Paris).

Practically all the British Despatches can be obtained.

The German War Reports are now being published.

Russian and Austrian Communiqués can be found in newspaper files, but of course at present all things are in confusion in these countries, and no other official reports are available.

A short report of the Belgian Army from July, 1914, to Dec. 31, 1914, has been published.

Gen. Pershing's Report has been published.

If the reader will be guided by the synopsis narrative in this book, a good use may be made of the various publications which carried along the narrative of the War as it was going on.

Probably the most useful of these will be the "New York Times War Volumes" and the files of the "Current History Magazine."

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